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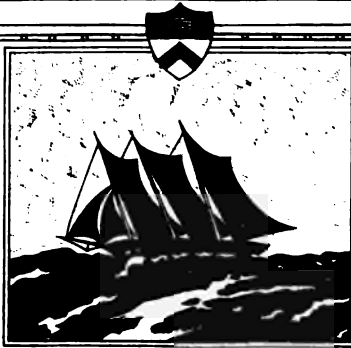
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*Kings of the Road
Rifle & Gun*

"Thormarby"



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**KINGS OF THE ROD
RIFLE AND GUN**



Frontispiece to Vol. I.]

1700 H. Gifford Road.

KINGS OF THE ROD RIFLE AND GUN

BY

ARTHUR HAY

AUTHOR OF

"KINGS OF THE HUMAN FIELD,"

"KINGS OF THE TONG," ETC.

WITH 32 PORTRAITS AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

VOL. I.

LONDON

H. J. HINSON AND CO.
PATERNOSTER ROW

1901



Frontispiece.

Willmott Willmott-Dixon.

KINGS OF THE ROD RIFLE AND GUN

BY

“THORMANBY”

AUTHOR OF

“KINGS OF THE HUNTING FIELD,”

“KINGS OF THE TURF,” ETC. . .

WITH 32 PORTRAITS AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

VOL. I.

LONDON

HUTCHINSON AND CO
PATERNOSTER ROW

1901

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Preface

I AM but a gatherer and disposer of other men's stuff." It is thus that Sir Henry Wotton, who was, as his friend and biographer Izaak Walton tells us, "a most dear lover and frequent practiser of the art of angling," and a good poet to boot, modestly describes himself in his preface to "The Elements of Architecture." Without presuming to place myself within measurable distance of so eminent a person, I may apply that description to myself in regard to a great portion of "Kings of the Rod, Rifle, and Gun."

But I hope I shall not be thought to overstep the bounds of modesty if I claim credit for something more than compilation in the present work. For, original research has in several cases resulted in my unearthing details and incidents undiscovered by previous biographers, whilst personal knowledge has enabled me to supply anecdotes and facts which have never before appeared in print. Moreover, the estimates I have formed of the characters sketched in these pages have

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at least the merit of being the outcome of independent study and judgment.

It is possible, therefore, that even that terror of sciolists, the well-informed and superior person, may find in these volumes something which he did not know before. I wish, however, to make it clearly understood that I have not attempted to cater for the omniscient and omnivorous reader to whom there is no new thing under the sun. I do not soar to such heights of presumption and audacity. Mine is the much humbler *role* of purveyor to the more numerous but less formidably equipped "general reader," who will, I hope, be pleased to find collected within the covers of a single book biographical and anecdotal records of famous sportsmen with whose lives and actions he has hitherto been but scantily acquainted.

I cannot, of course, expect that the selection I have made will satisfy everyone. Some names, no doubt, will be objected to as too familiar and others as too obscure. I shall be taken to task for sins of omission and of commission. Among the latter the superior person will probably be down upon me for the impertinence of supposing that there is anything new to be written about Izaak Walton at this time of day, and that, if there were, "Thormanby" is the person qualified to write it. In extenuation of this and the like sins of commission I would plead that to have left out such names would have been a worse sin, that there are some men of whom the public is never tired of reading, and that

there are numbers of the class to whom this book appeals who will find something fresh—to *them*—even in the chapter on such a hackneyed subject as Izaak Walton and Charles Cotton.

As to sins of omission, I can only say in defence that I have carefully considered the claims of a long roll of worthies before making my choice, and that I have chosen those whose lives afforded most material for interesting and entertaining biography. There have been some great sportsmen—the late Earl of Malmesbury and his father, for example—whom I would gladly have included in my gallery of portraits, but the information obtainable was so scanty and so devoid of personal interest that I felt the impossibility of making anything readable out of it. I think the names which I have selected are fairly representative of the great experts with Rod, Rifle, and Gun.

I have confined myself to deceased celebrities, because I should have been hampered by many considerations in dealing with living notables. But I readily admit that there are sportsmen living who have as much right to be considered “Kings” of sport as any of those whom I have included in these volumes. Sir Edward Braddon and Mr. F. C. Selous are shikarris of equal renown with Sir Samuel Baker and William Cotton Oswell; and not far below them are such hunters of big game as Mr. Clive Phillipps-Wolley, Mr. Baillie-Grohman, and Mr. F. J. Jackson, whose contributions

to the Badminton volumes on "Big Game Shooting" are as fascinating reading as any sportsman could desire. Then again, Sir Ralph Payne-Gallwey, Lord Walsingham, Earl de Grey, and Mr. A. J. Stuart-Wortley are knights of the trigger whose prowess may bear comparison with that of Colonel Hawker, Captain Ross, or Lord Kennedy; whilst in the domain of angling Mr. Cholmondeley-Pennell (poet and crack-shot to boot), Major Traherne, Mr. R. B. Marston, Mr. Christopher Davies, and many other expert fishermen of to-day can make good their claim against the best of their predecessors to be regarded as "Kings of the Rod."

"Kings," be it understood, according to Thomas Carlyle's definition of the word, "Könning, *i.e.*, *can*-ning—Able-man." The latest philologists, I believe, scout that definition; but let it stand: it was good enough for the sage of Chelsea, and it will serve for me, especially as it makes the title undeniably applicable to all and sundry in these pages. For in this sense the Shoemaker of St. Boswell's is as much a King as the Lord of Holkham.

Artists and men of letters, poets, painters, philosophers, sculptors, chemists are all to be found in the Valhalla of sportsmen, and the field-sports which Britons love gain additional lustre and dignity from the fact that men of genius have found them objects worthy of enthusiastic pursuit.

In all these biographical sketches I have gone on the principle that when a man has told the story of his own adventures it is best, as far as possible, to give his *ipsissima verba*. One may criticise the feats of heroes in one's own language, but it is only fair to the actors to let them tell the tale of their own exploits in their own way and in their own words. The reader can thus form his own judgment of the veracity and the literary style of the narrator. If such excerpts have increased the bulk, I think they have also added to the interest of the book.

Moreover, I have not confined myself to the sporting side of the lives here depicted, but have included every phase of character which helped towards the making of a vivid and faithful delineation.

With regard to the illustrations, I have to express my grateful acknowledgments in many quarters for permission to reproduce pictures.

To Messrs. Vinton & Co. I am indebted for the admirable steel engravings of Captain Ross, Lord Elcho, and Lord Stamford from *Baily's Magazine*.

I have to thank Mr. R. B. Marston, Editor of *The Fishing Gazette*, for permission to use the portrait of Charles Cotton and the sketch of the Fishing-house Doorway, reproduced from Mr. Marston's superb quarto edition of "The Compleat Angler."

To Messrs. Longmans, Green, & Co. I tender my acknowledgments for their kindness in acceding to

Preface

my request to make use of the bust of Colonel Peter Hawker from their edition of the Diary of that great sportsman.

For the characteristic likeness of John Younger I have to thank Messrs. J. & J. H. Rutherford, of Kelso, publishers of the Autobiography and "Literary Remains" of the "Shoemaker of St. Boswell's." And, by the way, touching John Younger I have to correct a misstatement in the text. The date of his death was *the 19th of June, 1860*, not November, 1863, as erroneously given in my sketch of his life.

For the portrait of "Christopher North," the finest, I think, in existence, I must express my gratitude to my old friend Mr. James Hogg, who possesses a rare engraving from a photograph taken by Messrs. Ross & Thompson, of Edinburgh, and has kindly permitted me to reproduce it in my book. There is a good story attached to this portrait. Professor Wilson was very difficult to catch for such a purpose as taking his photograph. Mr. Hogg's father and himself were very anxious to have a portrait of the Professor for their well-known periodical *Hogg's Instructor*. When they at last succeeded in landing their fish, Christopher wanted to see what the photographer had made of him. On beholding the photograph he exclaimed, "Ah! that's the fellow, is it? I shouldn't like to meet him on a dark night! *And what's more, I shouldn't like to buy a horse of him!*" But the reader has only to look at the noble

portrait to see how grotesquely "Kit North" libelled his "counterfeit presentment."

Sir Ernest Clarke, Secretary of the Royal Agricultural Society, has courteously allowed me to use the copy of the famous Gainsborough portrait of Thomas William Coke, Earl of Leicester, the original of which hangs in Holkham House. The copy was taken by special permission to illustrate Mr. Walter Rye's admirable article on "Coke of Norfolk" in *The Royal Agricultural Society's Journal*.

I have also to thank the Proprietor of *The Field* for leave to reproduce the portrait of the Hon. Grantley Berkeley, which was taken specially for that journal after Mr. Berkeley's return from his American sporting tour.

For the portrait of Sir Samuel Baker in the uniform of a Turkish Pasha I have to make my grateful acknowledgments to Messrs. Macmillan & Co., the publishers of Mr. Douglas's Memoir of the famous sportsman and explorer, in which the portrait first appeared.

I offer my sincerest thanks to Miss Anna M. Stoddart for her kind permission to use the portrait of her father, originally the frontispiece to his "Angling Songs." I have elsewhere expressed my indebtedness to Miss Stoddart's charming Memoir of the poet-angler of Kelso.

My grateful acknowledgments are also due to Mrs. Russel, who was good enough to lend me the excellent

Preface

photograph of her late husband, Alexander Russel of *The Scotsman*, which is here reproduced.

By the courteous permission of Messrs. Henry Graves & Co., Ltd., publishers of the engravings, I have secured the fine equestrian portrait of Sir Richard Sutton as Master of the Quorn Hounds, which forms the frontispiece to the second volume, and also the celebrated "Connoisseurs," in which Sir Edwin Landseer has limned his own likeness.

For the rest, the reproductions of Abraham Cooper's pictures speak for themselves, and serve to give the sportsman of to-day some idea of the modes in which his grandfather and great-grandfather pursued their sport with Rod and Gun.

WINCHELSEA, *November*, 1900.

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KINGS OF THE ROD, RIFLE, AND GUN

The Fathers of Angling

THE late Dr. Samuel Wilberforce, sometime Bishop of Oxford and of Winchester, and known to the irreverent as "Soapy Sam," was not much of a practical sportsman, though he had a genuine sympathy with field sports. On one occasion, however, when on a visit at the country seat of a well-known nobleman during the shooting-season, he was persuaded to join the shooting party. He entered with considerable zest into the sport, though I am not sure that he actually handled a gun. On returning to the house his host mentioned that his head gamekeeper was a Dissenter, and although he did not wish to interfere with the religious opinions of his servants, still, he confessed that it was an annoyance to him that this man alone of all his establishment should absent himself from church. It didn't look well, and his lordship thought that perhaps the Bishop, if he would undertake the task, might talk the man over and induce him to become a church-goer. The Bishop laughingly consented to try the effect of his persuasive powers, and went to the head keeper's lodge. He soon put the

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good man at his ease by those winning manners which charmed all with whom he came in contact, and gradually led the conversation up to the point at issue, until quite naturally the question came :

"By-the-bye, how is it that I don't see *you* at church? You know it's my duty as a bishop to look after these things. Surely you don't find anything in the Bible against going to church."

"No, my lord," returned the sturdy Dissenter ; "neither do I find anything in the Bible to warrant a preacher of the Gospel in going out shooting. The Apostles never did."

"No," said the Bishop sweetly ; "true, they did not. You see, there were neither guns nor game in Palestine. They went out fishing instead. It is the older and, some think, the more exciting sport."

As disciples of the "older sport," then, I am bound to give the "Fathers of Angling" the first place among "Kings of the Rod, Rifle, and Gun." But where shall I begin? Who was the first Father of Angling? Who first discovered the delights of the gentle craft? Learned mediæval writers tell us that the honour belongs to Seth, the third son of Adam. The curious in such matters will find this and other fantastic theories on the origin of angling gravely set forth by Piscator in "The Compleat Angler," and as that classic work is within the reach of every reader, I will say no more on the point.

It is odd that some of the most enthusiastic anglers that have ever wielded rod have been soldiers. Ulysses was an angler, Mark Antony was an angler, and,

coming to more modern times, I shall introduce the reader to several "veterans practis'd in war's game" who have found delight in the most peaceful of sports. There was, for example, that stalwart warrior and devoted patriot, Scotland's national hero, Sir William Wallace. If we are to believe his minstrel trumpeter, "Blind Harry," Wallace was a keen fisherman, and it was on one of his fishing excursions that he fell in with certain minions of Earl Percy, who "was captain then of Ayr." Percy's men demanded the whole of "Wullie's" well-filled creel. He good-naturedly offered them part, but they would have "all or nothing." Whereat the stalwart Scot's temper rose, and when one of Percy's men drew a sword to enforce his demand, "Wullie," with no weapon but a "pont-staff," floored him and disarmed him. Then the row began; and when it ended the big Scotsman stood unvanquished, with three of his assailants stretched dead before him. A tragic ending to a day's angling, and the precursor of many still bloodier days, both for Scot and Southron!

More ardent anglers, however, than the men of the sword have been they of the gown and cassock. Their name is Legion, and the first of them that comes under the historian's ken is Piers of Fulham, whose manuscript treatise on fishing—the earliest known—I have seen in the library of my own old college, Trinity, Cambridge. The date assigned to it is 1420, and the author's address to his readers, stripped of archaisms in spelling, runs thus: "Lo, worshipful sirs, hereafter followeth a gentlemanly treatise full convenient for

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contemplative lovers to rede and understand, made by a noble Clerke Piers of Fulham, sometime usher of Venus School, which hath briefly compiled many pretty conceits in love under covert terms of fishing and fowling."

All we know of Piers of Fulham is contained in his curious poem. From his own showing he must have been a notorious gossip and picker-up of scandal :

Piers of Fulham was a well-governed man ;
He knew the condition of every bride,
There was no husband from him hyde.

How he got his information he does not say—possibly he wormed it out of his friends at angling suppers ; in any case he must have been a very unpleasant person to all his married neighbours. But even admitting that his references to angling are allegorical, he was evidently well versed in the gentle craft. He knows all about "gins and baytes of delyte," "nettys and angle hookys"; he can tell you how to lay night-lines in "weris and sprepteris [whatever they may be] in narrow brookys." He has a sportsmanlike aversion to poaching on his neighbours' preserves, and is a stickler for fair fishing in running rivers that are common to all honest anglers. He knows the habits and habitats of all fresh-water fish, and above all he recognises the attraction of the sport for the "contemplative"—thereby forestalling "Father Izaak" in his pet phrase.

There are four manuscripts of this poem of Piers of Fulham in existence, two at Cambridge and two

at Oxford. The Rev. Charles Henry Hartshorne and Mr. Carew Hazlitt have both published the poem in collections of Early English metrical romances, but neither of them has attempted to throw any light on the authorship or commented on the remarkable circumstance that this is the first detailed and elaborate allusion to the art of angling in the language. Whoever Piers of Fulham may have been, and whatever he may mean by calling himself "an usher of Venus School," I confidently claim him as a genuine "brother of the angle."

But though Piers of Fulham is credited with the first English work on angling which can be dignified with the name of a treatise, he was not the earliest writer to mention fishing. Professor Skeat says the oldest notice of fishing in the English language is the passage in "Ælfric's Colloquy," where fishing is referred to as a craft. It is contained in the Cotton MS. Tiberius, A 3. The colloquy is written in Latin, with an inter-linear English (Anglo-Saxon) translation; and was intended to help scholars in acquiring some knowledge of Latin. For this purpose it takes the form of a discourse between a master and his pupils. One of these is a young fisherman, and the conversation between the master and this pupil is to the following effect, *M.* standing for Master, and *P.* (*Piscator*) for Fisher-boy :

"*M.* What craft do you exercise?—*P.* I am a fisher.

M. What do you get by your craft?—*P.* Victuals, clothes, and money.

M. How do you catch fish?—*P.* I get into my boat and cast my nets into the river, and throw out

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my angle [hook] and my rods, and whatever they catch I take.

M. What if the fish be unclean?—*P.* I throw the unclean away, and take the clean for food.

M. Where do you sell your fish?—*P.* In the town.

M. Who buys them?—*P.* The townspeople. I cannot catch as many as I could sell.

M. What fishes do you catch?—*P.* Eels, and luces, and minnows, and eel-pouts, trout and lampreys, and whatever else swim in the river.

M. Why do you not fish in the sea?—*P.* I do so sometimes, but seldom, because rowing in the sea is troublesome to me.

M. What do you catch in the sea?—*P.* Herrings and salmon, dolphins and sturgeon, oysters and crabs, mussels, periwinkles, sea-cockles, plaice and flounders and lobsters, and many more.

M. Do you not wish to catch a whale?—*P.* I do not.

M. Why not?—*P.* Because it is a perilous thing to catch a whale. It is safer for me to go to the river with my boat than to go with many ships a whale-hunting.

M. Why so?—*P.* Because I had rather catch a fish I can kill, than one that can, with one stroke, sink and kill both me and my comrades.

M. Nevertheless, many do catch whales, and escape the dangers, and get a good sum of money by it.—*P.* You say sooth; but I dare not do so, on account of my sluggishness of spirit."

It is interesting to note that the very first piece of angling literature in the English language takes the

form of a dialogue—a form which has been a favourite with anglers ever since, from Izaak Walton to Sir Humphry Davy.

The earliest *printed* treatise on fishing in our language is that assigned to Dame Juliana Bernes, or Barnes (not, as it is commonly misspelt, Berners), compiler of the “Boke of St. Albans,” the first woman writer in English literature. Legend has it that Dame Bernes was sometime Prioress of Sopwell Nunnery, near St. Albans, that she was the daughter of Sir James Bernes, who was beheaded in the reign of Richard II., and that she was beautiful, high-spirited, and fond of sport. But this is mere conjecture. Beyond the statement on the title-page of the “Boke of St. Albans,” printed in 1486, that the matter therein contained was collected by Dame Juliana Bernes, there is no proof that any such person ever existed. As to the tradition that she was Prioress of Sopwell Nunnery, it is true that there is a long blank in the extant list of the prioresses of that convent, and it is possible that there may have been during that unrecorded period a prioress named Juliana Bernes; but if so, why should she be styled “Dame,” a title only given to married women?

I am not concerned here with the “Boke of St. Albans,” and its disquisitions on Hawking, Hunting, and Coats-of-Arms, but only with the “Treatyse of Fysshinge with an Angle,” which is not to be found in the first edition of the “Boke,” but was added ten years later. Now, I do not believe that this “Treatyse” was written by a woman. The details and instructions given are far too minute and technical to have come

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from a woman's pen, and the sport was not one in which the women of that time indulged. I can find no evidence whatever that the ladies of the Middle Ages ever patronised angling. Had they done so, there would certainly have been some reference to it in the mediæval chronicles of manners which have come down to us. These chronicles contain frequent allusions to the pastimes in which ladies engaged. Hunting and hawking were favourite amusements. Shooting, too, with the crossbow was a feminine accomplishment. I have seen at the British Museum two rough old cuts representing ladies shooting not only deer but rabbits. But never a word or a picture have I found illustrative of their pursuit of angling. From which I infer that ladies did not in the Middle Ages patronise the rod and line. It is only in quite recent times that women have taken seriously to fishing ; and so far as I know, the only woman who has ever written a book on the gentle craft is Mrs. Mary Orvis Marbury, of Boston, U.S., whose work on "Favourite Flies" is known to most anglers.

There was indeed a book published early in the eighteenth century entitled "The Female Angler," which professed to instruct ladies "in the newest and most excellent way of Angling and taking all manner of fish ; containing a collection of choice and rare experiments, and secrets now in practice among the most famous Fishermen Anglers." The book is dedicated to the Countess of Sunderland, and the authoress was said to be Mrs. Hannah Wolley. But the work is a mere compilation from various treatises on angling ;

and that it cannot claim to be written by a woman for women is evident from such passages as the following : “ *He* that would be a compleat sportsman must first acquire to *himself* the noble art of Patience. *His* temper must be calm and serene, and *his* constitution strong enough to bear the vicissitude of all weathers. *He* must rightly understand the practical part, as well as theory,” etc., etc. From which it will be seen that the compiler, though ostensibly appealing to “female anglers,” did not take the trouble to alter the gender in copying from the works of male anglers addressed to their own sex.

That the author of the “Treatyse of Fysshinge” was a man I cannot doubt, for it is against reason to suppose that any woman should have so completely mastered the technicalities of angling in an age when, so far as there is any evidence to show, women never practised the sport. And that the prioress of a nunnery, the rules of which were exceptionally strict, should have been such an accomplished and experienced sportswoman as to be capable of writing a mediæval “Badminton” on angling is rather more than the present writer, at any rate, is able to swallow.

Those who credit Dame Juliana Bernes with the authorship of the “Treatyse of Fysshinge with an Angle” would have us believe that the Prioress of Sopwell Nunnery, with the necessity of providing fish for fast-days ever before her, cultivated the art of angling to meet that necessity. But then every monastery and convent had its fish-ponds, which were netted

whenever fish were wanted, and it is absurd to suppose that the prioress and her nuns sat down with rod and line to angle for the fare to supply their table on fast-days. It would have been a poor look-out for the unfortunate sisters if they had had to depend upon angling for their regular supply of fish.

The writer of the "Treatyse" was an expert, practical angler who knew what a good rod was and how to make it. Indeed, good Master Izaak, finding that the directions for making rods, lines, hooks, and floats given by this author could not be improved upon, calmly appropriated them without acknowledgment and gave them to the world as his own!

It is in this "Treatyse" that there occurs the first mention of fly-fishing, with minute instructions as to the flies effective for each month. "There be xii flyes wyth whyche ye shall angle to y^e trought [trout] and graylling and dubbe, lyke as ye shall now here me tell." And then follows the list, among which figures the "Red Hackle," the oldest known artificial lure. It is odd to read of the salmon: "You may also take him with a fly in lyke forme and manner as ye do a trought or graylling, but it is seldom seene."

Whoever the author of the "Treatyse on Fysshinge" may have been, he gave the text on which all angling writers have preached ever since with monotonous repetition. Take this passage from the exordium of the "Treatyse":

"Thus me semyth that huntynge, and hawkyng and also fowlyng ben so laborous and grevous that none of theym maye perfourme nor bi very meane that induce a

man to a mery spyryte : whyche is cause of his longe lyfe acordynge unto y^e sayd parable of Salamon. Dowteles thence folowyth it that it must nedes be the dysporte of fysshynge wyth an angle. For all other manere of fysshynge is also laborous and grevous : often makynge folks ful wete and colde, whych many tymes hath be seen cause of grete Infirmytees. But the angler may have no cold nor no dysease nor angre, but yf he be causer hymself. For he maye not lese at the moost but a lyne or an hoke ; of whiche he may have store plenty of hys own makynge, as this symple treatyse shall teche hym. Soo thenne hys losse is not grevous, and other greyffes may he not have savynges but yf ony fisse breke away after that hee is taken on the hoke ; or elles that he catche nought : whyche ben not grevous. For yf hee fayle of one he may not fayle of a nother, yf he doo'th as thys treatyse teechyth ; but yf there be nought in the water. And yette atte the leest he hath hys holsom walk and mery at his ease ; a swete aire of the swete savoure of the meede floures, that makyth hym hongry. He hereth the melodyous armony of foules. He seeth the yonge swannes ; heerons : duckes : cotes and many other foules wyth their brodes, whyche me semyth better than alle the noyse of honndys : the blastes of hornys and the scrye of foulis that hunters fawkeners and fowlers can make.

And yf the angler take fysshe : surely thenne is there is noo man merier thanne he is in his spyryte."

Robert Burton, in that wonderful medley of erudition and philosophy, "The Anatomie of Melancholie," gives angling as one of the cures for "moody vapours and

humours," and, paraphrasing the passage I have quoted, uses the phrases "still and quiet," "sweete silver streams," and the like pretty words which became the stock-in-trade of angling writers. Whenever Walton grows sentimental he invariably babbles of "sweet silver streams," and "meadow flowers," and the "melody of birds"; in fact, he simply rings the changes on the phraseology of the author of the "Treatyse on Fysshinge with an Angle" or his paraphraser, old Robert Burton, and thereby betrays a lamentable lack of original expression.

And now I come to the momentous question : Was Shakespeare an Angler? Can the brotherhood of the angle claim "the divine William" as one of their craft? Mr. Justice Madden, in his fascinating book "The Diary of Master William Silence," has proved conclusively that Shakespeare was an expert in the "Arte of Venerie," and wrote of hunting and coursing as none but a keen, practical sportsman could have written. There is hardly any craft or calling whose members have not found proof in Shakespeare's works that the Bard was a brother craftsman. And why not the angler? When the poet in "Much Ado about Nothing" makes Ursula say :

The pleasant'st angling is to see the fish
Cut with her golden oars the silver stream,
And greedily devour the treacherous bait :
So angle we for Beatrice,—

was he not thinking of days passed with rod and line among the deep pools of the Warwickshire Avon?

When Hotspur vents his bitterness on the arts by which Henry Bolingbroke had wormed himself into the affections of the people, it is to the angler's craft he goes for a simile :

And by this face,
This seeming brow of justice, did he win
The hearts of all that he did *angle* for.

In the heat and fury of his passionate denunciation of his uncle, does not Hamlet fly to the fisher's craft for an image, and accuse his father's murderer and his mother's betrayer for that he hath—

Thrown out his *angle* for my proper life ?

When Cressida puts to Troilus the question, "My lord, will you be true?" mark the metaphor in which the noble Trojan wraps his answer :

Who, I? Alas, it is my vice, my fault :
Whiles others *fish* with craft for great opinion,
I with great truth catch mere simplicity.

Who but an angler would have made Claudio say to Don Pedro, "Bait the hook well ; this fish will bite" ? Who but one who had often gone "a-angling" for the "foolishest of fishes" would have put into the mouth of Gratiano, as he seeks to cheer the sad Antonio, the words :

But fish not, with this melancholy bait,
For this fool gudgeon, this opinion ?

Would anyone who had never thrown a line have

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made Bertram, in lame defence of his meanness to Diana, urge as his excuse :

She knew her distance and did *angle* for me ?

And who can fail to detect the practical angler, versed in all the mysteries of the craft, in that muttered "aside" of Leontes, as he cast his jealous eyes on Hermione toying with Polixenes :

I am *angling* now,
Though you perceive not how *I give line*.

Then, lastly, listen to Jack Falstaff: "If the young *dace be a bait for the old pike*, I see no reason in the law of Nature but I may snap at him." If the man who wrote that had not many a score of times trolled for jack in full-fed Midland streams, then "fillip me with a three-man beetle."

What say you, then, my masters, is there not here "ocular proof" that William of Stratford was an angler? And may not every honest brother of the angle lift his head proudly and say, "Shakespeare was of us"?

There was a notable angler contemporary with Shakespeare who wrote the most delightful verses on the gentle craft that are to be found in the English language, but withal so modest and retiring a bard that he was not credited with the poems he had written till he had been two hundred years in his grave. Nay, so diffident was he that he could not be persuaded to publish his verses in his life-time; and it was not till after his decease in 1609 that a slim volume entitled "The Secrets of Angling, by J. D.," issued from the press. The authorship was attributed by some to Donne, by

others to half a dozen different rhymesters whose initials corresponded with those on the title-page; and we should probably never have known who the real author was, had not the discovery been made in 1811 that "The Secrets of Angling" is entered in the books of the Stationers' Company as being by "John Dennys, Esquier," not to be confounded with another and more notorious John Dennis, gibbeted in the *Dunciad*, author of two familiar sayings: "A man who could make so vile a pun would not scruple to pick a pocket"; and, "They will not let my play run: yet they steal my thunder."

All that is known of John Dennys is that he belonged to the old family of that name long settled in Pucklechurch, Gloucestershire. But that no man of his time knew more both of the history and practice of angling is evident from his remarkable poem, which has formed the ground-work of scores of angling books since his day. Walton knew "The Secrets of Angling" well, though he was wrong in his conjecture as to the authorship. "Will you hear," says Piscator in "The Compleat Angler," "the wish of another angler and the commendation of his happy life which he also sings in verse—*viz.* Jo. Davors, Esquire?—

Let me live harmlessly; and near the brink
Of Trent or Avon have a dwelling-place,
Where I may see my quill or cork down sink
With eager bite of perch or bleak or dace:
And on the world and my creator think:
Whilst some men strive ill-gotten goods t' embrace,
And others spend their time in base excess
Of wine, or worse, in war and wantonness.

Let them that list, these pastimes still pursue,
And on such pleasing fancies feed their fill ;
So I the fields and meadows green may view,
And daily by fresh rivers walk at will,
Among the daisies and the violets blue,
Red hyacinth and yellow daffodil,
Purple narcissus like the morning rays,
Pale gander-grass and azure culverkeys."

The tone of the poem, as will be gathered from this extract, is religious, and the moralising is truly after old Izaak's heart ; indeed, he was indebted to "The Secrets of Angling" for much of the sentiment and picturesque phraseology which are the charm of "The Compleat Angler." But John Dennys was not a mere bottom-fisher. He could both make and throw a fly with the skill of a true fisherman, and as a blend of the poet and the angler he had no equal till James Thomson wrote "The Seasons." His name deserves to be held in honour by all honest anglers, for none of the brotherhood, albeit there have been many good poets among them, has sung with more sweetness and grace the praises of the sport which they love.

In the year 1651 there was published a small duodecimo volume which literary anglers prize highly. Its title is as follows : "The Art of Angling : wherein are discovered many rare secrets very necessary to be known by all that delight in that recreation. Written by Thomas Barker, an ancient practitioner in that art."

In his Dedicatory Address to Lord Montagu, Thomas Barker informs that nobleman and the world in general that he was born "at Bracemeol in the liberty of Salop



IZAACK WALTON.

being a freeman and burgess of the same city." For more than sixty years he had practised the art of angling, and "spent many pounds in the gaining of it." At the time when he wrote "The Art of Angling," known also as "Barker's Delight," he was living at Westminster, and made his livelihood by accompanying gentlemen on fishing expeditions or teaching the use of tackle and bait at home. He thus advertises his qualifications in his book: "If any noble or gentle angler, of what degree so ever he be, have a mind to discourse of any of these wayes and experiments, I live in Henry the Seventh's Gifts, the next door to the Gatehouse in Westminster; my name is Barker: when I shall be ready, so long as please God, to satisfie them and maintain my art during life which is not like to be long."

One would hope that the old angler, who thus pathetically indicates that his course is nearly run, found pupils enough to render his declining years comfortable. But I doubt whether budding anglers were numerous enough to have made teaching the art a lucrative calling. In looking through the Diary of Nicholas Assheton, of Downham, near Clitheroe, who may, I suppose, be taken as a typical Lancashire squire of the early part of the seventeenth century, I find no mention whatever of angling. All his fishing apparently was done with nets of various kinds—a bastard sort of sport which Barker would have viewed with abhorrence.

To Thomas Barker belongs the discredit, in the eyes of modern anglers, of being the first to advocate the

practice of using salmon-roe as bait ; but he used it in a raw state, when it is not nearly so deadly a lure as in the preserved form, and, being a practical fisherman, he thought that any and every bait which would kill fish was permissible.

Barker is the first writer who mentions the reel and gaff, and the following passage on night-fishing for trout is worth quoting :

"My Lord sent to me at Sun going down to provide him a good dish of trouts against the next morning by sixe of the clock. I went to the door to see how the wanes of the air were like to prove. I returned answer, that I doubted not, God willing, to be provided at his time appointed. I went presently to the river and it proved very dark, I drew out a line of three silks and three hairs twisted for the uppermost part, and a line of two silks and two hairs twisted for the lower part, with a good large hook : I baited my hook with two lob-worms, the four ends hanging as meet [even] as I could guess them in the dark, I fell to angle. It proved very dark, so that I had great sport angling with the lob-worms as I doe with the flye on the top of the water : you shall heer the fish rise at the top of the water, then you must loose a slack line down to the bottom as near as you can guess, then hold your line strait, feeling the fish bite, give time, there is no doubt of losing the fish, for there is not one among twenty but doth gorge the bait ; the least stroke you can strike fastens the hook and makes the fish sure ; letting the fish take a turn or two you may take the fish up with your hands. The night

began to alter and grow somewhat lighter, I took off the lob-worm, and set to my rod a white Palmer-flye made of a large hook ; I had sport for the time till it grew lighter, so I took off the white Palmer and set to a Red Palmer made of a large hook ; I had good sport then till it grew very light. Then I took off the Red Palmer and set to a Black Palmer ; I had good sport, made up the dish of fish. So I put up my tackles and was with my lord at the time appointed for the service.

These three flies with the help of the lob-worms serve to angle all the year for the night, observing the times as I have shewed you in this night-work, the white flye for darknesse, the red flye in *medio*, and the black flye for lightnesse. This is the true experience for angling in the night, which is the surest angling of all, and killeth the greatest Trouts."

But Barker could not only kill trout : he could cook them ; and some of his recipes for serving up trout in savoury dishes are things to make the epicure's mouth water.

Barker, by the way, was an advocate of fishing down stream. "You must angle," he says, "always with the point of your rod downe the streame, for a fish hath not the quickness of sight so perfect up the stream as opposite against him ; observing seasonable time."

But the quaintest and queerest thing in Barker's book is his grave recommendation of *fishing with geese* ! "The principall sport," says this veteran of sixty years' angling experience, "to take a Pike is

to take a Goose or Gander or Duck: take one of the Pike lines I have showed you before: tye the line under the left wing, and over the right wing, about the body, as a man weareth his Belt: turne the Goose off into a pond, where Pike are, there is no doubt of sport, with great pleasure, betwixt the Goose and the *Pike*: It is the greatest sport and pleasure that a noble gentleman in *Shropshire* doth give his friends entertainment with."

Barker does not specify in what the sport consists, but I think the following anecdote will indicate the nature of the pleasure (!) which "a noble gentleman in Shropshire" and his friends derived from the spectacle.

Some years ago a farmer living near Lochmaben, Dumfriesshire, kept a gander, who not only had the trick of wandering himself, but also delighted in leading his cackling harem to circumnavigate their native lake, or to stray amidst the fields on the opposite shore. Wishing to check this habit, the farmer one day seized the gander just as he was about to spring into his favourite element, and tying a large fish-hook to his leg, to which was attached part of a dead frog, he suffered him to proceed on his voyage of discovery. As had been anticipated, this bait soon caught the eye of a greedy pike, which, swallowing the deadly hook, not only arrested the progress of the astonished gander, but forced him to perform half a dozen somersets on the surface of the water! For some time the struggle was most amusing,—the fish pulling, and the bird struggling with all its might; the one attempting to fly, the other to

swim from the invisible enemy ; the gander for one moment losing, the next regaining his centre of gravity, and casting, between times, many a rueful look at his snow-white fleet of geese and goslings, who cackled out their sympathy for their afflicted commodore. At length victory declared in favour of the feathered angler, who, bearing away for the nearest shore, landed on the smooth green one of the largest pikes ever caught in the castle-loch. The adventure is said to have cured the gander of his propensity for wandering.

That anecdote will, I think, suffice to show those who care to follow Thomas Barker's recipe for pike-fishing what delightful entertainment it is likely to afford them. It seems to me to be on a par with the duck-hunting by dogs in which I have seen men and boys indulge in those dark days when barbarity and cruelty were considered piquant adjuncts to sport. But it is pitiable to think of so good an angler and sportsman as Thomas Barker recommending such a pastime. Perhaps he would not have done so had he not deemed it politic to fall in with the barbaric views of sport entertained by that "noble gentleman in Shropshire." Still, something must be allowed for the age they lived in. It is only within the last fifty years that we have begun to realise that brutality and cruelty to man or beast are unsportsmanlike, and even now we have not wholly shaken ourselves free from bad traditions.

An accomplished angler and genuine sportsman of this period, to whom, I think, but scant justice has been done by his brethren of the angle, is Richard Franck,

sometime Captain in the Parliamentary Army, and author of a remarkable book, "Northern Memoirs." Now, Franck had a poor opinion of Izaak Walton, and had the audacity to flagellate that venerated "Father of Angling," for which act of sacrilege all writers on the gentle craft have poured the vials of their wrath upon him. But, for all that, though it may sound heresy to say so, Captain Richard Franck was a far better sportsman than the revered author of "The Compleat Angler," and knew far more about the art of angling in its higher branches than either Walton or Cotton. For he was a salmon-fisher, and the first to describe that noble sport in the rivers of Scotland. It was probably in 1658 that he made his tour in the North by Carlisle and Dumfries to Glasgow, thence to Stirling, Perth, Forfar, Loch Ness, and on through Sutherlandshire to Caithness. Sir Walter Scott, in the Preface to a new edition of "Northern Memoirs," makes the following comments on the book and its author :

"The rage of fine writing had unfortunately seized on Richard Franck, Philanthropos, with inveteracy unparalleled, unless perhaps in the case of Sir Thomas Urquhart of Cromarty ; and instead of acquainting us with what actually befel him, like a man of this world, he generally renders himself obscure, and sometimes altogether unintelligible, by his affected pedantry and obscurity. Probably no reader, while he reads the disparaging passages in which the venerable Izaak Walton is introduced, can forbear wishing that the good old man, who had so true an eye for nature, so simple a taste for the most innocent pleasures, and withal, so

sound a judgment, both concerning men and things, had made this northern tour instead of Franck; and had detailed in the beautiful simplicity of his Arcadian language, his observations on the scenery and manners of Scotland. Yet we must do our author the justice to state that he is as much superior to the excellent patriarch Izaak Walton in the mystery of fly-fishing, as inferior to him in taste, feeling, and common sense. Franck's contests with salmon are painted to the life, and his directions to the angler are generally given with great judgment. Walton's practice was entirely confined to bait-fishing, and even Cotton, his disciple and follower, though accustomed to fish trout in the Dove, with artificial fly, would have been puzzled by a *fish* (for so the salmon is called, *par excellence*, in most parts of Scotland) of twenty pounds weight; both being alike strangers to that noble branch of the art, which excels all other uses of the angling-rod, as much as fox-hunting excels hare-hunting."

Now, I think that Sir Walter is too hard upon Richard Franck in his criticism of the Roundhead Captain's style, which is nowhere very much worse than the worst parts of "The Compleat Angler"—for example, the discourse of "Auceps" and "Venator" in the "First Day." And I cannot echo the wish that Walton had made the northern tour instead of Franck. The excellent Izaak would have been as little at home in "Caledonia stern and wild" as Charles Lamb. What possible delight could the mild, contemplative London tradesman have found in the rush and roar of impetuous salmon-streams, or the gloom and grandeur of Highland

lochs and mountains! No: Franck's narrative might have been easily improved upon, no doubt, but Izaak Walton was not the man to do it. Doubtless Captain Richard, as a bold soldier who had ridden in, may be, a score of charges against the Cavaliers, and seen life in many stirring aspects, had a wholesome contempt for the loyalist linen-draper, who had never handled any weapon deadlier than his yard-wand and angling-rod, and scorned his bottom-fishing in the still waters of the Lea or that prosaic Cockney conduit the New River. I can understand and half sympathise with that contempt, and I think none the worse of the Cromwellian trooper for expressing it. He has his first dig at old Izaak in the following passage, where Arnoldus unfolds to his friend Theophilus the programme of their tour:

"We may also in our progress, as we travel the country, take a survey of their towns, forts, and fortresses, the like we may do of their cities, castles, and citadels, with their rivers, rivulets, and solitary loughs, which will furnish us with fish enough, provided we can furnish ourselves with baits. But to furnish every angler with a new bait was the studious invention of Izaak Walton, author (as you may read) of the Compleat Angler, who industriously takes care to provide a good cook (supposing his wife had a finger in the pye), which will necessarily be wanting in our northern expedition where the fry are numerous (nay, numberless almost) in some of those rapid and trembling streams; from whence the artificial fly (if that exercise be well understood) will contribute as

much as anything to court them ashore and sweeten our recreation. But I speak more peculiarly to ingenious artists, not to those flegmitick fellows, indigent of art; such only I allot an accidental fate."

But the passage in which he most severely flagellates Izaak, to the horror and indignation of all idolatrous Waltonians, is the following:

"*Arn.* That was my intention, had you never mentioned it; but were it to another, I should rather refer him to one of our modern assertors. For indeed the frequent exercise of fly fishing, though painful, yet it's delightful, more especially when managed by the methods of art, and the practical rules and mediums of artists. But the ground bait was of old the general practice, and beyond dispute brought considerable profit; which happened in those days when the curiosity of fly fishing was intricate and impracticable. However Isaak Walton (late author of the Compleat Angler) has imposed upon the world this monthly novelty, which he understood not himself; but stuffs his book with morals from Dubravius and others, not giving us one precedent of his own practical experiments, except otherwise where he prefers the trencher before the troling-rod; who lays the stress of his arguments upon other men's observations, wherewith he stuffs his indigested octavo; so brings himself under the angler's censure, and the common calamity of a plagiarist, to be pitied (poor man) for his loss of time in scribbling and transcribing other men's notions. These are the drones that rob the hive, yet flatter the bees they bring them honey.

Theoph. I remember the book, but you inculcate his *erratas*; however it may pass muster among common muddlers.

Arn. No, I think not; for I remember in Stafford, I urged his own argument upon him, that pickerel weed of itself breeds pickerel. Which question was no sooner stated, but he transmits himself to his authority, *viz.*, Gesner, Dubravius, and Aldrovanus, Which I readily opposed and offered my reasons to prove the contrary; asserting that pickerels have been fished out of pools and ponds where that weed (for ought I knew) never grew since the nonage of time, nor pickerel ever known to have shed their spawn there. This I propounded from a rational conjecture of the heronshaw, who to commode herself with the fry of fish, because in a great measure part of her maintenance, probably might lap some spawn about her legs in regard adhering to the segs and bull-rushes near the shallows, where the fish shed their spawn, as myself and others without curiosity have observed. And this slimy substance adhering to her legs, etc., and she mounting the air for another station, in probability mounts with her. Where note, the next pond she happily arrives at, possibly she may leave the spawn behind her, which my Compleat Angler no sooner deliberated, but drop'd his argument, and leaves Gesner to defend it; so huff'd away; which rendred him rather a formal opinionist, than a reformed and practical artist, because to celebrate such antiquated records, whereby to maintain such an improbable assertion.

Theoph. This was to the point, I confess ; pray go on.

Arn. In his book intituled the Compleat Angler, you may read there of various and diversified colours, as also the forms and proportions of flies. Where, poor man, he perplexes himself to rally and scrape together such a parcel of fragments, which he fancies arguments convincing enough to instruct the adult and minority of youth, into the slender margin of his uncultivated art, never made practicable by himself I'm convinc'd. Where note, the true character of an industrious angler more deservedly falls upon Merrill and Faulkner, or rather upon Isaac Owldham, a man that fished salmon with but three hairs to a hook, whose collections and experiments were lost with himself.

Theoph. That was pity."

That Walton, whose simple mind was open to receive the most childish superstitions, deserved that castigation I think no candid person will deny after reading the following passage from "The Compleat Angler." Piscator is discoursing of the pike, a subject of which he was as lamentably and ludicrously ignorant as of the salmon, and he says gravely : "It is not to be doubted but that they are bred, some by generation and some not, as, namely, of a weed called pickerel weed, unless learned Gesner be much mistaken, for he says, this weed and other glutinous matter, with the help of the sun's heat, in some particular months, and some ponds apted for it by nature, do become pikes. But doubtless divers pikes are bred after this

manner, or are brought into some ponds, some such other ways as is past man's finding out, of which we have daily testimonies."

Now, in his knowledge of natural history and in his practical skill as an angler, Richard Franck was far superior to Walton, and how could he help scoffing at the simplicity and ignorance of the writer who could propound such theories as to the propagation of pike! For the rest, Franck's rules for fly-fishing are admirable, and show a wider knowledge of the subject than those of Charles Cotton.

He was a rolling stone, this Roundhead soldier, sportsman, and theologian. When he came back from his northern tour he lived for a while at his native place, Nottingham, ever famous for its anglers, and then betook himself to America. After some years of adventurous wandering there he returned to England, brought himself to an anchor at last in London at the Barbican, wrote some fantastic and unutterably dreary religious books in a style worthy of Don Adriano de Armado, and gave up the ghost in the year 1694.

Another notable Roundhead angler and soldier was General Robert Venables, a man of far greater consequence than Franck. Venables had military talents of a high order. His services in the Parliamentary army both in England and Ireland were distinguished. He was Commander-in-Chief of the forces in Ulster, governor of Belfast, Antrim, and Lisnegarvey, and took a prominent part in the great battle near Dublin when the Royalists, under Lords

Ormonde and Inchiquin, were routed with great slaughter. Just before he was ordered to Ireland, General Venables, then a widower, met Mrs. Elizabeth Aldersley Lee, the widow of Thomas Lee, Esquire, of Darnhall, whose Diary, "wrote by herself," is extant. The lady was eminent for her piety, and had also a snug jointure, which, together with some personal charms, rendered her attractive in the eyes of the General. She thus quaintly describes the perturbation caused by that godly and gallant warrior's attentions :

"But now I looked upon myself as a person so settled that I had nothing to disturb my peace, so long as I enjoyed the satisfying presence of my God, for which I bless His name ; yet then I met with a business that did exceedingly vex my spirit, the love of a gentleman that I durst not but esteem, a very precious servant of God, and in that regard I could not scorn him. Yet himself and some others know how I have long slighted him. But that neither satisfied him nor brought me freedom from the trouble of it . . . God only knows the sighs and tears and prayers this business cost me. For the truth is, I am very unwilling to change my condition, yet eyeing Providence and seeing something of God in it, I durst not but in some measure satisfy his desire."

But then "some cross-passages fell out" between her and her suitor, which were like to have ended in estrangement. "I will not," she writes naively, "mention what offers I have had since I parted from him. But I bless the Lord my heart did not at all go out after them." After more than two years' separation the

General returned from Ireland, sought her out at Chester, and pressed his suit so warmly that she yielded. He had set his mind upon a triple alliance—his son to her eldest daughter, and her son to his eldest daughter. The General vouched for his son's being free and ready to be ruled by him. The scheme, however, did not work out quite as he wished. "But when the son came," writes the widow, "it did not prove so. For he was in affection engaged to one in Ireland that loved him. So our friends on both hands were against it. Oh! it proved a sad business both in the beginning and the end of it."

But both young couples were married and were apparently miserable ever after. A cloud, too, fell over the General's life. He was placed in command of the land forces despatched for the capture of Hispaniola in 1654. The fleet which conveyed them was under the joint command of Admirals Penn and Goodson. From the outset there was friction between Venables and his colleagues. He made the most earnest protests against sending out troops in such ill condition. "A wicked army it was," says his wife, "and sent without arms or provisions." But no heed was paid to the General's protests, for he was not in good favour with Cromwell and his Council, who suspected him, not without reason, perhaps, of having secret leanings towards the Monarchy. Venables, however, did his duty nobly. "On one occasion," writes his biographer Gosden, "at the assault of a fort, he being before brought very low with his flux, the toil of the day had so far spent him that he could not stand or go,

but was supported by two; and in that manner he moved from place to place to encourage the men. But the latter he could not prevail on, neither by commands, entreaties, or offers of rewards. At last, fainting among them, he was carried off."

Contrary to the General's advice, the troops, consisting mostly of volunteers, who had been tempted to enlist by the prospect of Spanish loot, were on arriving at Hispaniola informed that they would be allowed a fortnight's pay in lieu of booty, and that any attempt to secrete plunder would be punished with death. Naturally there was a mutiny; the soldiers felt that they had been defrauded, and refused to fight. The attempt to capture Hispaniola ignominiously failed, and the expedition returned to England without having accomplished anything except the capture of Jamaica, which was thought a very unimportant prize.

Penn and Venables were both sent in disgrace to the Tower, but were soon discharged with a surly intimation that there was not sufficient evidence to convict them of criminal negligence. Mrs. Venables probably expressed the General's feelings when she wrote: "Unfaithfully was my dear Husband dealt withal. Nothing of their promises performed. They pretended the honour of God and the propagating of the Gospel. But alas! their intention was self-honour and riches, and so the design prospered according to their hypocrisy." She writes almost as bitterly as Lucy Hutchinson when the base conduct of the Presbyterians at Nottingham towards *her* husband stirred her gentle spirit into fierce revolt. Soured and

disappointed, the gallant old soldier retired into the country, and there solaced himself with pen and rod, for it seems to have been as much pleasure to him to write upon the sport he loved as to practise it.

In 1662 he published the first edition of his "Experienced Angler," which has been frequently reprinted since. This edition is prefaced by the following commendatory letter from Izaak Walton :

*"To his Ingenious friend the Author of his
Angling improved.*

HONOURED SIR.

Though I never to my knowledge had the happiness to see your face, yet accidentally coming to a view of this discourse before it went to the press, I held myself obliged, in point of gratitude for the great advantage I received thereby, to tender you my particular acknowledgment, especially having been for thirty years past, not only a Lover, but a practiser of that innocent recreation, wherein by your judicious precepts, I found myself fitted for a higher form, which expression I take the boldness to use, because I have read and practised by many books of this kind formerly made publick, from which, although I received much advantage in the practice, yet, without prejudice to their worthy authors, I could never find in them that height of judgment and Reason, which you have manifested in this, as I may call it, Epitome of Angling. Since reading whereof, I cannot look upon some notes of my own gathering, but methinks I do *puerilia tractare*. But lest I

should be thought to go about to magnify my own judgement, in giving yours so small a portion of its due, I humbly take leave, with no more ambition but to kiss your hand, and to be accounted your

humble thankful servant

IZAAK WALTON."

Now, considering that Venables ranks fly-fishing as "the most pleasant and delightful part of angling," and places it first of all kinds of fishing, that commendatory letter from a confirmed bottom-fisher is creditable to the broad-mindedness of the revered Izaak.

I will just give one short quotation from the Parliamentary General's book as a specimen of his style.

"When you come first to the river in the morning, with your rod beat upon the bushes or boughs which hang over the water, and by their falling upon the water you will see what sort of flies are there in greatest numbers ; if divers sorts, and equal in number, try them all, and you will quickly find which they most desire. Sometimes they change their fly ; though not very usual, twice or thrice in one day ; but ordinarily they do not seek another sort of fly till they have for some days even glutted themselves with a former kind, which is commonly when those flies die and go out. Directly contrary to our London gallants, who must have the first of everything, when hardly to be got, but scorn the same when kindly ripe, healthful, common and cheap ; but the fish

despise the first, and covet when plenty, and when that sort grow old and decay, and another cometh in plentifully, then they change; as if nature taught them that every thing is best in its own proper season, and not so desirable when not kindly ripe, or when through long continuance it begins to lose its native worth and goodness."

It was not surprising that when General Monk began to take measures for the restoration of the king he should have found in Venables a man willing to assist him. The Commonwealth had not treated the old soldier so handsomely that he should feel bound to it by any tie of loyalty or gratitude. So he threw in his lot with Monk and the Monarchy, and as Governor of Chester Castle did yeoman's service in keeping the King's peace. Whether he found Charles any more grateful than his old Parliamentary masters I do not know. Probably not, for gratitude was never one of the strong points of the Stuarts. But in any case let us hope that the peaceful delights of angling still to the end gave him ample compensation for Fortune's buffets.

He had taken part in two revolutions. He had seen a king beheaded, and he had seen a king restored. Had he lived a few months longer he would have witnessed a third revolution, and seen another king ousted from his throne. But Death spared him this sight, and took him away in the year before James II. fled from his kingdom and left his crown behind him.

Izaak Walton and Charles Cotton

AND so by gentle stages I have led up to the "Common Father of all Anglers," the immortal Izaak Walton, on whom so many reams of paper and gallons of ink have been expended that I am almost ashamed to do more than mention his name. I confess that my own feeling towards "meek Walton's heavenly memory", is something akin to that of the old Greek who fled from Athens because he was tired of hearing Aristides called "the Just." The worship of "Father Izaak" has been a trifle overdone. It has become a fetish among some angling writers, to whom "The Compleat Angler" is as sacred as the Bible or the Koran. The carnal mind resents having this pattern of piscatorial piety held up to its admiration and thrust down its throat. But, though my gorge rises against the fulsome adulation of your Waltonian idolator, for old Izaak himself I have still at heart a feeling of affection and reverence. There was too little of the "devil" in him to make a real sportsman, but his saintly character was thoroughly in harmony with the mild form of angling which he practised. There are moods in which "The Compleat Angler" comes to one as a soft

and soothing anodyne. How sweet and reposeful and altogether redolent of that "Old Leisure," gone now for ever, is such a picture as this:

"I sat down under a willow-tree by the water-side, and considered what you had told me of the owner of that pleasant meadow in which you had then left me: that he had a plentiful estate and not a heart to think so; that he had at this time many law-suits depending, and that they both damped his mirth and took up so much of his time and thoughts that he himself had not leisure to take the sweet content that I, who pretended no title to them, took in his fields: for I could sit there quietly: and looking on the water, see some fishes sport themselves in the silver streams, others leaping at flies of several shapes and colours: looking on the hills, I could behold them spotted with woods and groves: looking down the meadows, could see, here a boy gathering lilies and lady-smocks, and there a girl cropping culverkeys and cowslips, all to make garlands suitable to this present month of May: then the many other field-flowers, so perfumed the air, that I thought that very meadow like that field in Sicily of which Diodorus speaks, where the perfumes arising from the place make all dogs that hunt in it to fall off and to lose their hottest scent. I say, as I thus sat, joying in my own happy condition, and pitying this poor rich man that owned this and many other pleasant groves and meadows about me, I did thankfully remember what my Saviour said, that the meek possess the earth: or rather they enjoy what the others possess and enjoy not: for anglers and meek quiet-spirited



CHARLES COTTON.

men are free from those high, those restless thoughts which corrode the sweets of life."

Or take this bit of angling, picked out at random :

"About four of the clock in the afternoon repair to your baited place : and as soon as you come to the water-side, cast in one half of the rest of your ground-bait, and stand off : then whilst the fish are gathering together, for there they will most certainly come for their supper, you may take a pipe of tobacco ; and then in with your three rods as in the morning : you will find excellent sport that evening till eight of the clock : then cast in the residue of your ground-bait, and next morning by four of the clock visit them again for four hours, which is the best sport of all : and after that, let them rest till you and your friends have a mind to more sport."

It is not exciting, that picture of sport, but the restfulness and the lazy indifference to the lapse of time which it suggests are refreshing to those who suffer from—

This strange disease of modern life,
With its sick hurry, its divided aims,
Its heads o'er-taxed, its palsied hearts.

And then those mild symposia at "the honest ale-house where we may have a cup of good barley-wine, and sing 'Old Rose,' and all of us rejoice together," the hostess "handsome and civil," the "cleanly room, lavender in the windows and twenty ballads stuck about the wall"—how sweet and wholesome and refreshing it all is ! how it breathes the scent of honeysuckle and wild roses ! I love that "honest ale-house," and often come the times

when I would say with Venator : " Good master, let us go to that house : for the linen looks white, and smells of lavender, and I long to lie in a pair of sheets that smell so."

Therein lies the perennial charm of "The Compleat Angler"—this breath of peace, contentment, quiet, and leisure that it wafts to us, hot and weary with the feverish life of to-day. And then to think that this worthy London tradesman lived this contemplative life, wrote this placid pastoral, and pursued his gentle sport unruffled in one of the stormiest periods of English history—when King's men and Parliament men were fighting like devils, when all England was seething with civil war and ringing with the clash of arms ! "The Compleat Angler" was first published in 1653, but four years after Charles I. was beheaded at Whitehall, when the memory of the impious murder of "the Lord's Anointed," as Walton must have regarded it, was still fresh in the memory of Royalists. But our good, mild "Father Izaak" was not a fighting man—he was the very embodiment of the prudent and pacific *bourgeois* to whom the thought of risking his skin is abhorrent—so he let Cavaliers and Roundheads crack one another's crowns to their heart's content, whilst he sensibly but unheroically stuck to his shop and faithfully followed the advice which he gave to "all that are lovers of virtue": "Be quiet and go a-angling." I envy him his serenity and content, whilst I am devoutly thankful that all Englishmen have not been made in the same unheroic mould.

The known facts concerning Izaak Walton are, I

suppose, familiar to everyone. In what year he came up from his birthplace, Stafford, to London is not known for certain. But it has recently been discovered that he was made a member of the Ironmongers' Company on November 12th, 1618, and, seven years' residence being the qualification, this would place the date of his arrival in London approximately at 1611. He is described in the entry in the books of the Company as "late apprentice to Mr. Grinsell." It does not follow, of course, that Walton was an ironmonger because he was a liveryman of that Company; but Mr. Marston, nevertheless, claims to have settled by documentary evidence the fact that Walton was not, as has been generally supposed, a "sempster," or linen-draper, but an ironmonger. I cannot say that the emendation commends itself to me. I would rather think of the gentle Izaak as a purveyor of "soft goods" than of "hardware." It seems more in harmony with the fitness of things that the former should have been his trade. For then one can understand how his nature should have been "subdued to what it worked in." The handling of hosiery I can conceive to have a softening influence conducive to such mildness of manner and meekness of disposition as we find in the author of "The Compleat Angler." But the touch of ironmongery tends, methinks, to a hardening and blunting of the finer feelings, and would surely have been repugnant to those sensitive fingers which impaled the frog and worm upon the hook with the exquisite tenderness of a lover. However, if "Father Izaak" were an ironmonger, it is all the more credit to him that he did not let the

hardness of his trade communicate itself to his character.

I don't think that many persons nowadays read his lives of Donne, and Wotton, and Herbert, and Hooker, and Sanderson, albeit, Wordsworth says :

The feather, whence the pen
Was shaped that traced the lives of these good men,
Dropp'd from an angel's wing."

His best work, as he himself no doubt believed, is in those admirable Lives. But posterity has thought otherwise, and "The Compleat Angler" lives in unfading greenness, while all the rest has withered into oblivion. And yet "The Compleat Angler" is a perfect cyclopædia of errors. Even in that art of angling on his knowledge of which he plumed himself, "Father Izaak" was sadly to seek. As a barbel- and chub-fisher he was without doubt unrivalled, and his instructions for the taking of these, and indeed most other, coarse fish could hardly be improved upon. But when he has the temerity to write about salmon, trout, grayling, or pike he displays a pitiful ignorance both of the habits of the fish and of the modes of taking them. He admits that his directions on fly-fishing, of which he knew absolutely nothing, were given to him "by an ingenious brother of the angle, an honest man and most excellent fly-fisher," but even then they are practically worthless. He quotes freely, too, from Thomas Barker, who really did know something about fly-fishing ; sometimes, indeed, good Master Walton, who had a considerable gift of appropriation, "lifts" whole passages of Barker without

any acknowledgment, and, what is more, spoils them by "variations" of his own, which only serve to exhibit his plentiful lack of knowledge.

The credulity of "Father Izaak" is amazing. It will swallow anything which the "learned Thebans," for whom he had so superstitious a reverence, choose to assert. Its capacity for gorging the marvellous is worthy of the great pike on whose voracity he comments. He believes that "the marrow of the thigh bone of a heron is a great temptation to any fish"; that pike are generated from the pickerel weed; that frogs settle on the heads of carp and ride the fish to death; that eels are bred "either of dew or out of the corruption of the earth"; that "barnacles and young goslings are bred by the sun's heat and the rotten planks of an old ship, and hatched of trees"; that there is a river in Arabia "of which all the sheep that drink thereof have their wool turned into a vermilion colour," and another in Judæa "that runs swiftly all the six days of the week and stands still and rests all the Sabbath"; that in the Ganges "there be eels thirty feet long"; that "dolphins love music and will come when called for." All these things and a thousand others equally ludicrous to the well-informed person of the nineteenth century Master Izaak Walton believed in. His knowledge of natural history, derived, as it mostly was, from what were called in his days "learned writers," principally Germans, was the strangest mixture of fable and imperfectly understood fact. To distrust a "learned writer" would have seemed little short of impiety to one of such a reverential temperament as Walton. But I cannot help regretting that the good

man did not exercise his own powers of observation a little more, and trust less to "learned writers," whose "facts" were evolved from their own inner consciousness and not from an intelligent study of nature. It is in this respect that Walton seems to me so infinitely inferior to Gilbert White.

Walton lived to the patriarchal age of ninety, and retained his faculties unimpaired to the last. Only a few months before his death he published, with a Preface and Biography from his own pen, "Thealma and Clearchus, a pastoral history in smooth and easy verse, written long since by John Chalkhill, Esq., an acquaintance of Edmund Spenser." One of Chalkhill's songs is quoted in "The Compleat Angler," and this is the only specimen of his "smooth and easy verse" which has survived. To the last old Izaak loved the craft which he did so much to popularise. When he was eighty-three he announced his intention of making a pilgrimage into Derbyshire, a long and hazardous journey for a man of his years in those days of rough travelling, to visit his friend Charles Cotton and enjoy the delights of angling in the beautiful vale of the Dove. He was twice married. His first wife was Rachel Floud, and in his marriage licence he is described as "of the Cittie of London Ironmonger." Mr. Marston regards this as a proof that Walton was an ironmonger by trade. He may have been at that time, or the term may simply imply that he was a liveryman of the Ironmongers' Company; but the tradition that he was, in his later life, at any rate, a haberdasher is too strong to be disregarded. His

second wife was a half-sister of Dr. Ken, the saintly Bishop of Bath and Wells, who, when Dean, refused to let Nell Gwynne lodge in his Deanery, who was one of the seven bishops sent to the Tower by James II., and who is now best known to fame as the author of the Morning and Evening Hymns. By her Izaak had a son and daughter : the former took holy orders, and became in due course Canon of Sarum ; the latter married Dr. William Hawkins, Prebendary of Winchester, at whose house Walton died "on the fifteenth day of December, 1683, in the great frost." He was buried in the cathedral, where, through the indefatigable exertions of that enthusiastic angler, Mr. R. B. Marston, a handsome memorial was erected to him by subscription in 1893. But his real monument, more lasting than brass, is "The Compleat Angler," which has become a classic in the language. By a "classic" is usually meant a book which everybody talks about and nobody reads. I don't suppose that ten persons in a thousand who talk of "The Compleat Angler" have ever honestly read it through ; but there will never be a time, one may safely prophesy, when it will not "fit audience find though few."

The credit and renown attaching to the authorship of "The Compleat Angler" has been practically monopolised by Izaak Walton, whose fame has quite overshadowed that of his friend and coadjutor, Charles Cotton, though the latter was, to my thinking, incomparably the better sportsman of the two. I do not say that for inimitable simplicity and grace of

style Cotton's contribution to "The Compleat Angler" is equal to Walton's. It is a very creditable imitation of the master, but the indescribable charm of Walton is lacking. To the fly-fisher, however, the name of Cotton is dear, for he was the first to write at once elegantly, practically, and in detail of the highest form of the art of angling.

They were an oddly assorted pair, Izaak Walton and Charles Cotton, and their friendship was a singular one. At first sight it seems marvellous that two men so utterly dissimilar in their lives and characters should have become firm and affectionate friends—that the pious, sedate, irreproachable London tradesman should have found anything to attract him in the roystering, dissipated, reckless young squire, and *vice versa*. The writer of the brief notice of Cotton in the "Dictionary of National Biography" says that he was "a man of unaffected piety"! If he had written *affected* piety I could have understood him, for it was often politic in Cotton's days to affect piety and other virtues, and Charles might have found such affectation advisable in his intercourse with the sober and devout haberdasher. But how anyone who has ever glanced at Cotton's "Scarronides; or, the First Book of Virgil Travestie" could call him a man of *unaffected piety* I am at a loss to imagine. His version, for example, of the Judgment of Paris is as obscene and indecent as anything that even Rochester ever wrote. It is all very well to say that much breadth and coarseness were allowed to the writers of those days. But this man revels in lasciviousness—a thing abhorrent to the cleanly

nature of Walton, who saw no wit in either "Scripture jests or lascivious jests—for the Devil will help a man that way inclined to the first, and his own corrupt nature which he always carries with him, to the latter." And what does Piscator say to Venator?—"I would you were a brother of the angle: for a companion that is cheerful and free from swearing and scurrilous discourse is worth gold. I love such mirth as does not make friends ashamed to look upon one another next morning."

But that was hardly either the discourse or the mirth that Charles Cotton favoured. "My delight," he tells one of his friends, "is to toss the can merrily round." And in one of his poems he writes:

I speak it with tears,
I've been a toss-pot these twenty good years,
And have drank as much liquor as made me a debtor.

He was always over head and ears in debt, besieged by duns for weeks together; and they show you to this day in Dovedale the cave in the limestone cliffs where he used to hide from his persecuting creditors.

But if Charles Cotton had neither the morals nor the piety of his "father Izaak," he had good qualities of his own which rendered him a lovable soul. A jolly, generous, free-handed, big-hearted gentleman he was, whose purse and cellar and larder were ever at the disposal of a friend. That luckless poet Richard Lovelace twice owed his release from prison to Charles Cotton, the best friend he ever had, as he himself admits. And when the once brilliant courtier and

man of fashion, wont to flaunt his suits of cloth and silver among the gayest, had spent all his patrimony in useless attempts to serve his sovereign, and was wandering, poor and in rags, from one obscure beggars' lodging-house to another, it was Charles Cotton that once more came to his help. Every Monday morning George Petty, haberdasher in Fleet Street, carried twenty shillings from Charles Cotton to the broken-down poet as he lay slowly dying in Gunpowder Alley. Twenty shillings was a large sum in those days, and shillings were none too plentiful with Charles Cotton then or at any time of his life.

Cotton was born at Beresford, in Staffordshire, on April 28th, 1630, and was therefore thirty-seven years junior to Izaak Walton, who had been an intimate friend of his father. The elder Charles Cotton was a gentleman of good Hampshire family, connected with the Earls of Chesterfield and Harrington, and was, moreover, a man of brilliant abilities, to which Clarendon has borne eloquent testimony in his "History of the Rebellion." He inherited a considerable fortune, which he increased by his marriage with Olive, daughter of Sir John Stanhope, of Elvaston, who brought him estates in Derbyshire and Staffordshire. Charles the younger was the only child, and he was allowed to do pretty much as he pleased. It is probable that he went up to Cambridge, though he took no degree there. It is certain that he travelled for some time in France and Italy. But he never seems to have contemplated entering any profession. To dabble in literature and pursue his beloved art of fly-fishing in the Dove were

enough to occupy such time as he could spare from conviviality.

In 1656, when he was six-and-twenty, he married a daughter of Sir Thomas Hutchinson, of Owthorpe, Notts, and a sister of Colonel Hutchinson, who has been immortalised by the pen of his devoted wife Lucy. It was probably this union with a noted Puritan family which secured him from molestation by the Parliamentarians, in spite of the fact that he was an ardent and pronounced Royalist.

Cotton had probably first made the acquaintance of Walton at his father's house, for the retired London tradesman was often a guest there, and nothing more strongly shows the high position and reputation which the author of "The Compleat Angler" enjoyed than the familiar terms on which he associated with county gentlemen of old family like Cotton and eminent divines like Donne.

The younger Cotton was without doubt a man of brilliant parts. Lovelace, in dedicating to him "The Triumphs of Philamon and Amoret," describes him as "the noblest of our youth and best of friends," and I can well believe that his fascinating manners, his handsome person, and his pretty wit, made him popular in all circles.

In 1670 his wife died, leaving him with a family of three sons and five daughters; and soon afterwards he joined the army in Ireland with the rank of captain. Beyond the fact that his journey thither gave him the opportunity of writing an amusing satiric poem, "A Voyage to Ireland in Burlesque," I do not know that

it left any mark on his career. In 1675 he married again. His second wife was Mary, daughter of Sir William Russell, Bart., of Strensham, Worcestershire, and widow of Wingfield, 5th Baron Cromwell. She had a jointure of £1,500 a year, which enabled her husband to keep some kind of state at his paternal mansion, Beresford Hall, but did not help him to liquidate his debts. Indeed, he drifted further and further into insolvency, and was as pestered with duns as Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

It was in 1675 that he renewed his acquaintance with Walton, under the circumstances described in the following letter :

“TO MY MOST WORTHY FATHER AND FRIEND,
MR. IZAAK WALTON THE ELDER.

SIR,—Being you were pleased, some years past, to grant me your free leave to do what I have here attempted : and observing you never retract any promise when made in favour of your meanest friends: I accordingly expect to see these following particular directions for the taking of a trout, to wait upon your better and more general rules for all sorts of angling. And though mine be neither so perfect, so well digested, nor indeed so handsomely couch'd as they might have been, in so long a time as since your leave was granted, yet I dare affirm them to be generally true : and they had appeared, too, in something a neater dress, but that I was surprised with the sudden news of a sudden new edition of

your 'Compleat Angler': so that having little more than ten days' time to turn me in and rub up my memory (for in truth I have not in all this long time though I have often thought on't and about as often resolved to go presently about it), I was forced upon the instant to scribble what I here present you: which I have also endeavoured to accommodate to your own method. And if mine be clear enough for the honest master of the angle readily to understand, which is the only thing I aim at, then I have my end and shall need to make no further apology: a writing of this kind not requiring, if I were master of any such thing, any eloquence to set it off and recommend it: so that if you in your better judgment, or kindness rather, can allow it passable for a thing of this nature, you will then do me the honour if the cypher fixed and carved in the front of my little fishing-house, may be here explained: and to permit me to attend you in public, who in private have ever been, am, and ever resolve to be,

Sir,

Your most affectionate son and servant,

CHARLES COTTON.

BERESFORD,

10th of March 1675-6."

Walton in reply says :

"You now see I have returned you your very pleasant and useful discourse of 'The Art of Fly-fishing' printed just as it was sent me: for I have

been so obedient to your desires as to endure all the praises you have ventured to fix upon me in it. And when I have thanked you for them, as the effects of an undissembled love, then let me tell you, Sir, that I will readily endeavour to live up to the character you have given of me, if there were no other reason, yet for this alone, that you, that love me so well, and always think what you speak, may not, for my sake, suffer by a mistake in your judgment.

And, Sir, I have ventured to fill a part of your margin, by way of paraphrase, for the reader's clearer understanding the situation both of your fishing house and the pleasantness of that you dwell in. And I have ventured also to give him a 'Copy of Verses' that you were pleased to send me, now some years past, in which he may see a good picture of both: and so much of your own mind too, as will make any reader, that is blessed with a generous soul, to love you the better. I confess that for doing this you may think me too bold: if you do, I will say so, too: and so far commute my offence, that though I be more than a hundred miles from you and in the eighty-third year of my age, yet I will forget both, and next month begin a pilgrimage to beg your pardon: for I would die in your favour and till then will live,

Sir, your most affectionate Father and friend,
IZAACK WALTON.

LONDON,
April 29, 1676."

Whether the venerable angler ever paid that promised visit is uncertain. But that he had been previously an

honoured guest at Beresford is evident from the words of Piscator in Cotton's supplement to "The Compleat Angler" when he invites Venator to partake of his hospitality: "And now, Sir, if I am not mistaken I have half overcome you: and that I may wholly conquer that modesty of yours I will take upon me to be so familiar as to say, you must accept my invitation, which that you may the more easily be persuaded to do, I will tell you that my house stands upon the margin of one of the finest rivers for trout and grayling in England: that I have lately built a little fishing house upon it, dedicated to anglers, over the door of which you will see the two first letters of my father Walton's name and mine twisted in cypher: that you shall lie in the same bed he has sometimes been contented with, and have such country entertainment as my friends sometimes accept, and be as welcome too, as the best friend of them all."

That little fishing-house, of which a sketch is here reproduced, is still standing, reverently preserved, a monument to the friendship of the two most celebrated of all the Fathers of Angling.

How true a sportsman Charles Cotton was, may be gathered from the following extract, which is only one of many passages in his treatise on the "Art of Fly-fishing" that show him in the same light. Piscator is giving the novice Viator his first lesson in casting a fly for trout:

"Viator. There's one! I have him.

Piscator. And a precious catch you have of him:

pull him out! I see you have a tender hand: this is a diminutive gentleman, e'en throw him in again and let him grow till he be more worthy your anger.

Viat. Pardon me, Sir, all's fish that comes to the hook with me now.—Another!

Pisc. And of the same standing.

Viat. I see I shall have good sport now: another! and a Grayling. Why, you fish here at will.

Pisc. Come, come, cross the bridge and go down the other side lower, where you will find finer stream and better sport I hope than this. Look you, Sir, here is a fine stream now, you have length enough, stand a little further off, let me entreat you, and do but fish the stream like an artist and peradventure a good fish may fall to your share.—How now! What! is all gone?

Viat. No, I but touch'd him: but that was a fish worth taking.

Pisc. Why now, let me tell you, you lost that fish by your own fault: for you are never to offer to strike a good fish, if he do not strike himself, till first you see him turn his head after he has taken your fly, and then you can never strain your tackle in the striking, if you strike with any manner of moderation. Come, throw in once again and fish me this stream by inches: for I assure you here are very good fish: both trout and grayling lie here: and at that great stone on the other side, it is ten to one a good trout gives you the meeting."

In his "Ode to Poverty" Charles Cotton gives a pathetic picture of the miseries of his life.



COTTON'S FISHING-HOUSE.

Obstrep'rous creditors besiege my door,
 And my whole house clamorous echoes fill ;
 From these there can be no retirement free,
 From room to room, they hunt, and follow me ;
 They will not let me eat, nor sleep, nor pray,
 But persecute me night and day ;
 Torment my body, and my mind,
 Nay, if I take my heels and fly,
 They follow me with open cry,
 At home no rest, abroad no refuge can I find.

And yet, if tradition speak true, he might have been in affluent circumstances had he not deliberately thrown away a fortune. It is said that a near relative of his, a Miss Cokayne, had made him the heir of her large property, but he deeply offended her by the following lines in his "Scarronides":

And then there is a fair great ruff
 Made of a pure and costly stuff
 To wear about her Highness' neck
 Like Mistress Cokayne's in the Peak.

Miss Cokayne wore a ruff of unusual dimensions to conceal the deformity of her neck and shoulders, and the reference to her was, to say the least of it, in the grossest bad taste. But when Cotton was remonstrated with and asked to strike out the allusion to the lady in his next edition, he coarsely refused. "I will not," he said, "spoil my joke for any hump-backed bitch in Christendom." And so Miss Cokayne, not unnaturally indignant at the insult, altered her will, and Charles lost a fortune.

It is also said, however, that the deformed Miss Cokayne died before the publication of the "Scarronides," and

had no fortune to leave. In that case, one may dismiss the story, so far as it relates to the lost fortune, as false. But the reference to the lady, even supposing she were dead, could not have failed to give offence to the family, and it is very probable that in this way Cotton may have paid dearly for his reckless satire.

Anglers both, how different were the lives of Walton and Cotton! The one had all that sweet content and quiet which he claims as the peculiar heritage of brothers of the angle; the other, to use his own words:

Though he had wherewithal to eat,
His bread did yet
Taste of affliction, and his cares
His purest wine mix'd and allay'd with tears.

The one, blest with ample health and wealth, enjoyed a green old age; the other, broken in body and estate, died when he was four years short of three score.

Whether Cotton added gambling to his other follies is not certain, but in his "Compleat Gamester" he discourses of billiards, cards, horse-racing, cock-fighting, and bowling, in the language of one who was experienced in all those modes of gaming and had paid for his experience. A more innocent recreation which he loved almost as much as angling was gardening, of which he writes learnedly and pleasantly in his "Planter's Manual." There could not, I take it, have been much inherent vice in a man who was so devoted a fisherman and gardener. One of the Children of the Open Air he was at heart, and so long as he was in his native element his life was cleanly and sweet.

Of the sincerity of the friendship between Walton and Cotton there can be no doubt, although, as I have shown, there was much in the character and habits of the younger man of which the elder could not have approved. But, doubtless, Charles showed only the best side of himself to his "father," and I think he loved the old man so dearly that he would have been loth to do or say anything to hurt or offend him. We know that Cotton, in deference to the tastes of his "father," even pretended to like smoking, though when the fear of offending the beloved Master was not before his eyes he denounced tobacco as "that pernicious and stinking weed." And I daresay he was always on his good behaviour in the presence of the venerable and pious Izaak. Each had lovable qualities which won the heart of the other, and the thought of their friendship calls up a picture altogether pleasant to contemplate.

Colonel Thomas Thornton

WHEN the late Dr. James Bowstead, sometime Bishop of Lichfield, was first raised to the Episcopal Bench as Bishop of Sodor and Man, he described his reception in his diocese in the words of St. Luke after the shipwreck of himself and St. Paul at Melita, "The barbarous people showed us no little kindness." That was but sixty years ago, yet so little was the Isle of Man then known to most persons in England that Dr. Bowstead's English friends condoled with him on his banishment to that "savage island," which they supposed to be inhabited only by smugglers, fugitives from justice, and half-civilised kernes. And the Bishop humoured them in the idea—though I doubt whether the Manx clergy and gentry would have appreciated the joke.

It was with much the same feelings that Colonel Thomas Thornton's friends and brother-sportsmen in England regarded his departure on a sporting tour through the Highlands of Scotland in the year 1786. It was but ten years since Samuel Johnson had published his "Journey through the Western Islands of Scotland," a record of adventurous travel which excited

more wonder and admiration than than a peregrination through Thibet would excite now. There were numbers of English people who still remembered the appearance of Prince Charlie's wild Highlanders as, with unkempt locks, and filthy tartan plaids, jabbering an unknown tongue, they marched through the streets of Carlisle, Preston, and Derby; and most folks thought that all Scotland was a barbarous country inhabited solely by these ferocious savages. For the picturesque kilt of to-day had not yet been invented by an English tailor, and no Walter Scott had yet arisen to throw the glamour of romance over the men and mountains of "Caledonia stern and wild."

Colonel Thornton was not, indeed, the first Englishman to visit Scotland in search of sport, for that honour belongs, as I have already shown, to that good fisherman but most affected writer Richard Franck, sometime Captain in Cromwell's Ironsides. But the Puritan angler dealt only with one branch of sport, whilst the convivial Colonel gives us a medley of shooting, fishing, hawking, and hunting.

It is probably only as the author of "A Sporting Tour through the Northern Parts of England and Great Part of the Highlands of Scotland" that Colonel Thornton is now known. The book has become a sporting classic, but the famous "Tour" was only one of many notable sporting episodes in a life full of racy incident. The Colonel's career was not in every respect what moralists call edifying; but he was the greatest all-round sportsman of his day, and for that reason this brief biography will, I am sure, be of interest to

his brother-sportsmen. Not only was he supreme with rod, rifle, and gun, but he was also a first-rate horseman both with hounds and on the race-course, a keen fox-hunter, a past-master in falconry, a fine athlete, a generous and intelligent patron of the fine arts, and a *bon vivant* of the first water.

For three generations the Thorntons had been distinguished both as soldiers and politicians. The grandfather of the subject of my sketch, William Thornton, was a staunch supporter of the Revolution of 1688, and was selected by the Yorkshire Whigs to present their congratulatory address to Queen Anne on the Union of England and Scotland, on which occasion Her Majesty conferred on him the honour of knighthood. The son of this worthy knight followed in his father's steps. For nearly twenty years he represented the city of York in Parliament, and was Colonel of the West Riding Militia. When the Jacobite rising of 'Forty-five broke out, he equipped a troop of yeomanry and a company of infantry from his own tenantry, entirely at his own expense, and they were almost the only portion of General Hawley's army at Falkirk which did not disgrace itself. Three-fourths of them were slain, and their commander, with a price of £1,000 on his head, only escaped capture by the skin of his teeth. For three days he lay hid in a disused cellar, up to his ankles in slime, and contracted malarial fever, from which he suffered to the end of his days. He owed his life and freedom to a kindly and loyal Scotswoman, the owner of the cellar, who kept him supplied with food, and put

Prince Charlie's men, who were hunting for him, on a wrong scent. He had his revenge at Culloden ; and when he returned to England he showed his gratitude to his preserver by settling upon her a handsome annuity.

In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1758 I find an enthusiastic Yorkshire bard addressing verses to William Thornton, of Thornville, which commence :

In arts and arms O thou so lately try'd,
Scourge of the rebels and thy country's pride,

and end with :

See Rome's lov'd Brutus live again in thee !

This might seem to intimate that William Thornton was a man of considerable note, but possibly some allowance must be made for poetic fervour and local patriotism.

In 1756 this same William Thornton, of Thornville, married the daughter of John Myster, Esq., of Epsom, a lady of remarkable beauty, who, in the following year, bore him a son in London—Thomas, the great sportsman with whom I am now concerned. The boy was sent to school at the Charterhouse, and thence, at the age of fourteen, to the University of Glasgow to complete his education. He had been two years at Glasgow when his father died suddenly at the age of fifty, but he continued his university studies for three years longer. Young Thornton was, even at this early period of his life, distinguished for his zealous and enthusiastic pursuit of field sports,

and especially falconry, on which he expended much time and money. When he left Glasgow and took up his residence at his father's Yorkshire estate, Thornville, he at once busied himself about creating a sporting establishment which had not its equal in the three kingdoms. His hawks and his dogs were trained to perfection. He founded the famous Falconers' Club which met at Barton Mills; and there is now in the possession of the Earl of Orford the magnificent silver-gilt urn presented to Thornton by the members of the club in recognition of his strenuous and successful efforts to revive the fine old sport of hawking.

On coming of age Thomas Thornton joined his father's old regiment, the West Yorkshire Militia, of which he subsequently became Colonel.

I have said that Thornton was an excellent athlete. Among his recorded exploits are the following. He once, for a wager of £100, cleared his own height, 5 ft. 9 in., twice in succession. On another occasion he cleared six five-barred gates on foot and repeated the feat on horseback all within the space of six minutes. He is also *said* to have walked four miles in thirty-two minutes, but I am sceptical as to the genuineness of that record. The old-time "clockers" are never to be trusted, and "walking" was an elastic phrase in those days, embracing any sort of "go-as-you-please" style of progression. Half of Captain Barclay's so-called walking exploits were of this description.

But it is more especially with Thomas Thornton's prowess with rod and gun that I am here concerned,

and I shall select some notable illustrations thereof from his famous sporting tour in the Highlands.

The most elaborate preparations were made for this great expedition. A sloop of considerable size was laden with stores and ammunition ; and carrying, besides the skipper, two mariners and a boy, two keepers to take charge of the dogs (a dozen in number), the falconer with as many hawks, and "a female house-keeper and cook," sailed from Hull to Forres, the nearest port to Raits, in Strathspey, where the Colonel had taken a shooting-box. Some idea of the extent of the stores carried by the *Falcon* may be gathered from the fact that forty-nine carts were required to convey them from Forres to Raits, besides the sledges, each drawn by four horses, by which the boats to be used on the lochs were transported. But then the Colonel did everything *en grand seigneur*. He had not only a perfect armoury of guns and rifles, with fishing-tackle and hawking-apparatus on a scale to match, but he had provided himself with a great stock of wines, spirits, and comestibles. For he had no mind to rough it so far as eating and drinking were concerned, and the frequent bills of fare he gives show how, even in the wild Highlands, this jovial sportsman and his comrades lived like fighting-cocks, washing down their trout and char, their roast mutton and brandered chickens, their game and sweets, with excellent port and claret, the finest Jamaica rum in the form of punch, and "incomparable porter from Calvert's," then the leading brewer in London.

Whilst the *Falcon* was slowly making her way by sea

to Forbes, the Colonel proceeded leisurely by land to Edinburgh, accompanied by Mr. Garrard, a young artist of repute, destined to make a name for himself as an animal-painter, whose spirited illustrations added greatly to the attractions of Colonel Thornton's record of his journey. At Edinburgh they were joined by the rest of their party, Messrs. Parkhouse, Serle, and Stewart. After laying in a further supply of stores to be forwarded by waggon, and paying his devoirs to Mrs. Siddons, who was then creating a huge sensation among Edinburgh play-goers, the Colonel started off, driving in a tandem, for Stirling. He fished and shot and hawked as he travelled. And his sport with the rod was phenomenal, for big fish swarmed then in every loch and stream. The Colonel tells us that it was no uncommon thing on Loch Bardowie, in Stirlingshire, to kill forty large pike in a day. It was on this loch that Colonel Thornton first tried "fishing with fox-hounds!" "The Fox-hounds," he writes in his diary, "were now got ready, and after a short time they killed nine very fine pike." And again: "We baited the fox-hounds, and Merlin soon got a view." This is rather puzzling, but the Colonel in a note condescends to give the following explanation:

"In order to describe this mode of fishing, it may be necessary to say that I make use of pieces of cork of a conical form, and having several of these differently coloured, and named after favourite hounds, trifling wagers are made on their success, which adds to the spirit of the sport. The mode of baiting them is by placing a live bait, which hangs at the end of a line

a yard and a half long, fastened only so slightly that on the pike's striking, two or three yards more may run off to enable him to gorge his bait. If more line is used it will prevent the sport which attends his diving, and carrying under water the hound ; which being pursued in a boat down wind (which they always take), affords excellent amusement ; and where pike, or large perch, or even trout are in plenty, before the hunters, if I may so term these fishers, have run down the first pike, others are seen coming towards them with a velocity proportionable to the fish that is at them.

In a fine summer's evening, with a pleasant party, have had excellent diversion, and it is, in fact, the most adapted of any, for ladies, whose company gives a *gusto* to all parties."

Despite this explanation, there was a common belief that Colonel Thornton claimed to have trained fox-hounds to fish for pike ! And a reviewer in the *Annals of Sporting*, commenting on the above passage, says : "What sort of *burst* was to be found in a dog's diving or being dragged along, remains an Euclidian problem." Was ever critic gifted with greater density ! And yet one of the chief grounds for the charge of unvaracity alleged against the Colonel was this alleged Munchausen story of fishing with fox-hounds !

It was in Loch Lomond that the Colonel, however, made his first sensational capture. The perch which he landed there is historic, and here is his own account of the taking of this monumental monster :

"I felt a fish strike and ordered the boat to stop : I

perceived that my bait had sunk deep, but, not recollecting the additional force the fish acquired thereby, imagined him of very great magnitude. My tackle was not to be surpassed, I had plenty of water to work him and no trees or roots to trouble me, but he made the rod at every exertion bend to the water. After much trouble he was secured in the landing-net and *proved to be a perch of about seven and a half pounds.* I never saw so fine a fed fellow, and what had given him additional power and had deceived me was, as I found, his being hooked by the belly part, which gave him the full strength of his head and tail. Fish so hooked have deceived me and no doubt many brother anglers before."

The precise weight of the fish is subsequently given as 7 lbs. 3 ozs., and I need hardly say that the annals of angling cannot show many bigger perch than that. It is not however, the largest on record. Pennant, in his "Survey of London," tells of an 8-lb. perch taken in the Serpentine. And there are also two other authenticated instances of perch of 8 lbs. being taken in England, one in the Wiltshire Avon and the other in Dagenham Reach, Essex. A 6-lb. perch was taken by Mr. Hunt, of Brades, Staffordshire, out of the Birmingham Canal, and I have heard of one of 5 lbs. which fell to the rod of an angler in Bala Lake. After such monsters the $3\frac{1}{4}$ -lb. perch which the present writer took forty years ago out of a private lake near Halifax, in Yorkshire, seems but "small pertaters"; it is the largest however, that has ever come under my own experience. Izaak Walton, indeed, declares that he knew of one

taken by a friend of his which was two feet in length ! But he draws the line at that measurement and mercifully spares us the weight, knowing that human credulity has its limits.

Scotland was then the fisherman's paradise—the lochs and rivers teemed with big fish, strangers for the most part to the angler's lure, for the gentle craft had few followers in the far north, and consequently the expert angler had such a time as he will never know again in any home waters. The Colonel tells us with great gusto how on June 30th he slipped away from his sleeping friends at 5 a.m., and before 8 a.m. killed five salmon in the Leven at Balloch, the largest weighing 41 lbs., the others ranging from 22 lbs. to 9 lbs. "Perfectly satisfied with my success," he writes, "I returned home." Perfectly satisfied, indeed ! What would not any angler of to-day give for such a three hours' sport ! He certainly would seek in vain for it in the Leven at Balloch, though Colonel Thornton's account of the size and number of the fish there is borne out by that given by his predecessor Captain Richard Franck.

But it was among the pike that our sporting Colonel won his greatest triumphs. The first of these was the great pike of Loch Petullich, a monster which had long defied all efforts to capture him. He had been shot at half a dozen times, and had been hooked but had carried off tackle and hooks as easily as Samson carried off the gates of Gaza. Now, at last, however, his hour was come. The Colonel was assured that the instant he threw in any living animal, even a dog, this prodigious fish would take it. "I adjusted a strong trimmer hook,"

writes the Colonel, "with a very moderate swivel : and accordingly threw in a live bait : the instant the stream carried it down a pike came at me with infinite eagerness, making the whole water foam, and ran me across the stream into his hold about forty feet. I gave him time to gorge, and then began to play him, having excellent sport with him for ten minutes." But just as the landing-net was being got ready, the fish broke his hold. Again the pike took the bait and again broke away. As a last resource the Colonel tried "a very tempting silver-coloured trout with a pair of snap hooks." A third time the big fish was struck, and after a desperate tussle, during which he twice ran out the whole of the Colonel's line, eighty yards, the great pike of Loch Petullich was vanquished and landed. His weight was 36 lbs., but big as he was, he was eclipsed by the still greater pike of Loch Alvie, the thrilling story of whose capture I shall allow the Colonel to tell in his own words, premising that he had struck the fish once but had, to his intense chagrin, lost him.

"As soon as we had recovered from the consternation this accident occasioned, I ordered the boat to cruise about, for the chance of his taking me again, which I have known frequently to happen with pike, who are wonderfully bold and voracious : on the second trip I saw a very large fish come at me, and, collecting my line, I felt that I had him fairly hooked ; but I feared that he had run himself tight round some root, his weight seemed so dead : we rowed up therefore to the spot when he soon convinced me he was at liberty, by running so far into the lake that I had not one inch of line more to give

him. The servants, foreseeing the consequences of my situation, rowed with great expedition towards the fish, which now rose about fifty yards from us, an absolute wonder ! I relied on my tackle, which I knew was in every respect excellent, as I had, in consequence of the large pike killed the day before, put on hooks and gimp adjusted with great care ; a precaution which would have been thought superfluous in London, as it certainly was for most lakes, though here barely equal to my fish. After playing him for some time I gave the rod to Captain Waller, that he might have the honour of landing him, for I thought him quite exhausted, when to our surprise, we were again constrained to follow the monster nearly across this great lake, having the wind too, much against us. . . . Frequently he flew out of the water to such a height that, though I knew the uncommon strength of my tackle, I dreaded losing such an extraordinary fish, and the anxiety of our little crew was equal to mine. After about an hour and a quarter's play, however, we thought we might safely attempt to land him, which was done in the following manner ; Newmarket, a lad so called from the place of his nativity, who had now come to assist, I ordered, with another servant, to strip and wade in as far as possible, which they readily did. In the meantime I took the landing-net, while Captain Waller, judiciously ascending the hill above, drew him gently towards us. He approached the shore very quietly, and we thought him quite safe, when, seeing himself surrounded by his enemies, he in an instant made a last desperate effort, shot into the deep again, and, in the exertion, threw one of the men on his back. His

immense size was now very apparent; we proceeded with all due caution, and, being once more drawn towards land, I tried to get his head into the net, upon effecting which, the servants were ordered to seize his tail and slide him on shore. I took all imaginable pains to accomplish this, but in vain, and began to think myself strangely awkward, when at length, having got his snout in, I discovered that the hoop of the net, though adapted to very large pike, would admit no more than that part. He was, however, completely spent, and in a few moments we landed him, a perfect monster! He was stabbed by my directions in the spinal marrow, with a large knife, which appeared to be the most humane method of killing him, and I then ordered all the signals, with the *sky scrapers* to be hoisted; and the whoop re-echoed through the whole range of the Grampians. On opening his jaws to endeavour to take the hooks from him, which were both fast in his gorge, so dreadful a forest of teeth, or tusks, I think I never beheld: if I had not had a double link of gimp, with two swivels, the depth between his stomach and mouth would have made the former quite useless. His measurement, accurately taken, was five feet four inches from eye to fork.

On examining him attentively, I perceived that a very large bag hung deep below his belly, and, thinking it was lower down than usual with other pike, I concluded that this was deeply fed but a short time before he was taken. After exhibiting him, therefore, to several gentlemen, I ordered that my house-keeper on whom I could depend, should have him

carefully opened, and the contents of his stomach be reserved for inspection, . . . which to our surprise consisted of part of another pike half digested. The tumour or bag arose from his having, no doubt many years since, gorged a hook, which seemed to us better calculated for sea than for fresh-water fishing. It was wonderfully honey-combed, but free from rust, so that I cannot doubt its having been at least ten years in his belly. . . .

The weight of this fish, judging by the trones we had with us, which only weigh twenty-nine pounds, made us, according to our best opinions, estimate him at between forty-seven and forty-eight pounds. I had before this seen pike of thirty-six pounds, and have had them at Thornville of above thirty ; but the addition of seventeen pounds and a half made this quite a different fish. There may be larger pike, but I cannot readily credit the accounts of such until I receive more authentic information."

The Colonel would no doubt have been surprised to learn that his 47-lb. pike was after all but an infant compared with the celebrated Kenmure pike, taken in Loch Ken, Galloway, the head of which is still preserved at Kenmure Castle ; the weight of this leviathan was 72 lbs. But this, again, takes a back seat by comparison with two captured in Ireland : one on the Broad Wood Lake, Killaloe, weighing 96 lbs.; the other in the Shannon, weighing 90 lbs. Beyond that limit one would have thought that no pike that romance ever conceived could have passed. Yet Sir John Hawkins, a credible person, and as the author of "The General History of Music" entitled to

respect, gravely tells us, in his Introduction to Izaak Walton's "The Compleat Angler," of a pike taken in 1765 in a pool at Lilleshall Lime-works that weighed 170 lbs., and had to be drawn out by several men with stout ropes fastened round its gills. I am thankful to say that no one has yet attempted to go one better than that!

With respect to the contents of the pike's stomach, I find in *The County Chronicle* of June, 1822, the following statement: "An enormous pike, caught at Chillington Pool, in Brewood, Staffordshire, the seat of Mr. C. F. Gifford, weighed 46 lbs. and measured from head to tail 4 ft. 3 in. In its belly was found a trout weighing $4\frac{1}{2}$ lbs., and a mole with which the fish was caught when devouring it."

Sir Samuel Montagu, when presiding last spring at the annual dinner of the Fly-Fisher's Club, laid it down as an axiom that in estimating the veracity of angler's tales as to the weight and size of fish landed or lost, one-third of both size and weight should be subtracted. And as no dissent was offered by any angler present to this proposition, I presume that everyone felt that the subtraction was moderate and reasonable. Yet strange to say, although Colonel Thornton was in his own day considered rather a tall shooter with the long bow, modern writers on angling give him credit for veracity in his statements of the dimensions of these pike, and do not even make Sir Samuel Montagu's reduction either in these cases or in that of the $7\frac{1}{2}$ -lb. perch which he caught in Loch Lomond. And, indeed, I am inclined to agree with them, for Colonel Thornton, though some of his

statements are reckless exaggerations, does not usually write like a braggart but like an honest sportsman, and his failures are set down as conscientiously as his successes.

With the gun Colonel Thornton achieved nothing phenomenal during his famous tour. But then game, though plentiful to his notions, was nothing like as numerous as it now is, when moors and forests are so carefully preserved, and breeding so scientifically stimulated. And, moreover, the fowling-pieces of that day were but very primitive weapons compared with the splendid engines of destruction now in use. The flints of Thornton's day must have sorely tried the sportsman's patience. On one occasion, says the Colonel, "at eight good shots my gun missed fire, though I put in five different flints." Then, it was but very rarely that he ventured on a double shot. Like most sportsmen of his day, he preferred a single gun. "I look upon all double barrels," he says, "as trifles, rather knick-knacks than useful." His two favourite guns, "Death" and "Destruction," however, he considered to be marvels of the gunmaker's art. With the latter he won a great match against Mr. Baird, who backed his gun to shot closer and harder than any other in England. The Colonel thus describes the winning performance of his own gun: "She drove in thirty-seven grains; every shot through fifteen quarter sheets of small brown paper, cut to the size of a quarter of a sheet of gilt, and exceedingly regular; and in three parts the shots came through so close that they had the effect of small balls but could only be ascertained as one shot." The

distance, however, is not given, so that one is left rather in the dark, after all, as to the real penetrating power of this wonderful gun.

With the companion piece, "Death," the Colonel made some very remarkable shooting. Here is a specimen: "My last shot was, I am convinced, *at the distance of 115 yards* on horseback and at the trot. I hit my bird, which had her wing broke, and was otherwise so much cut about that she could not fly." As I read that statement I think of Sir Samuel Montagu's reduction in the case of angler's stories, and I feel that even more than a third must be subtracted from that distance to bring it within the bounds of credibility.

I cannot find that on any occasion the Colonel's bag of grouse exceeded fifteen brace in one day, and the best day's partridge-shooting, he had with the Duke of Hamilton at Hamilton House only resulted in four and a half brace of birds, three hares, and a woodcock. With his hawks, however, the Colonel had some remarkable sport. In the glens around Loch Lomond they killed forty-nine woodcock in one week. Hawking was occasionally combined with shooting. "The hawks," he writes on one occasion, "drove the game into the junipers below us, by which means we had the sport without the fatigue." The grouse, of course, lay very close whilst their natural enemies were hovering in the air above them, and when flushed afforded easy shots. But I will do the Colonel the justice to say that it was not often he practised this lazy and not very sportsmanlike mode of shooting grouse. He preferred killing his game over dogs. "I

conceive," he says, "the great pleasure and elegance of shooting depends on the good order in which the dogs are kept." His own were perfectly broken, and it must have been a treat to shoot over them. Sometimes the Colonel combined fishing, shooting, and hawking in one day's sport. One entry in his diary records twenty-two moor-game to the gun, three to the hawks, and eighteen brace of trout.

Soon after his return from this famous sporting tour in the north, which, however, was only one of many, Colonel Thornton sold his paternal estate of Thornville, and purchased from H.R.H. the Duke of York Allerton Mauleverer, which he rechristened Thornville Royal. There was a tradition that the Colonel won this estate from the Duke at cards, but that was not the case, The covenant of purchase is extant by which Colonel Thornton agrees to pay H.R.H. the Duke of York £110,000 for Allerton Mauleverer—£10,000 down on signing the covenant, £20,000 ten days later on entering into possession, £30,000 on New Michaelmas Day. and £50,000 any time within the year. The Duke behaved very shabbily, and tried to trick the vendee out of £5,000; but the spirited Yorkshire sportsman would not submit to be swindled even by a Prince of the Blood. H.R.H. was ignominiously worsted, and never again did he enjoy the hospitality of the master of Thornville Royal.

But the Duke had his revenge some three years later, when Colonel Thornton was court-martialled for allowing himself to be drawn in his carriage into camp by the soldiers of his regiment, with whom he was

immensely popular. Colonel Thornton was convinced that the Duke, then Commander-in-Chief, instigated the court-martial out of spite, and that the officers backed him up out of toadyism. In a pamphlet entitled "An Elucidation of a Mutinous Conspiracy entered into by the Officers of the West York Regiment of Militia against their Commanding Officer in the year 1794. Dedicated (sans permission) to H.R.H. the Duke of York," he gave a full report of the proceedings, with his own indignant defence. I think the final passage, descriptive of the delivery of the sentence of the court-martial, is worth quoting :

"On the day appointed by Lieutenant-General Sloper and the other Generals, Lieutenant-Colonel Thornton proceeded to camp at eleven o'clock. The West York regiment, after some consultation, were formed into a mathematical figure somewhat resembling a square, by Lord Downe, their newly-appointed Colonel ; the men were directed to order their arms ; a profound and solemn silence ensued ; and (the officers being uncovered)

Lieutenant-General Sloper read the charges, and then pronounced the Sentence of the Court Martial, nearly in the following words :

'Lieutenant-Colonel Thornton, it is my duty to inform you that the Court have found you GUILTY on both the charges exhibited against you, and its sentence is that you be publicly reprimanded ; and I do hereby, in obedience to its orders, reprimand you accordingly.'

After which, Lieutenant-Colonel Thornton, with equal solemnity spoke to the following effect—'Sir, the very elegant and graceful manner in which you

have delivered my sentence compels me in gratitude to assure you that I have the highest sense of the honour done me on this occasion:—entertaining the highest esteem and veneration for your professional knowledge, permit me, Sir, to ask you what steps you would advise me to take, should the soldiers of the York regiment, or of any other, from their zeal, be prompted at any future time to pay me a similar compliment, by huzzaing and drawing me into camp or elsewhere?’

‘Was it to happen to me, Sir,’ replied General Sloper, ‘I would break my neck!’—or (agreeable to some present) the reply was, ‘I would break their necks,’ meaning the necks of the soldiers.

‘Excuse me, Sir,’ replied Colonel Thornton, ‘I think that would be carrying the joke a little too far.’

‘Parturiunt Montes nascitur ridiculus Mus.’

Thus ended a process which afforded full proof that men of illustrious birth, exalted stations, and splendid fortunes are not the less subject to the rancorous passions,—the atrocious principles and vile subserviency which induce the most heinous and detestable crimes,—than the lowest of mankind.”

It is not surprising to learn that the indignant Colonel promptly sent in his resignation.

Thenceforward Colonel Thornton devoted himself solely to sport and conviviality. The new Thornville Royal surpassed the old in the magnificence of its sporting establishment. The Colonel’s horses, hawks, pointers, setters, and spaniels became celebrated as the

finest in England. The best guns, rods, and tackle to be had for money were his, and he was the inventor of many practical improvements in the sportsman's equipment both for field and flood. The hospitality at Thornville Royal was princely. Colonel Thornton boasted that he had the largest and finest stock of old port in the kingdom. He was himself a six-bottle man till after he was sixty. Yet so strong was his head, and so sound his constitution, that he could sit out the most valiant toppers of his day ; and when he had seen the last of them under the table, usually about three o'clock in the morning, he would take a short stroll in the grounds, come back refreshed by the cool morning air, sit down to write letters and overhaul accounts for a couple of hours, and turn up at breakfast as fresh as a daisy. When or how he slept his guests never could ascertain ; and, indeed, there was a tradition that he never went to bed. But, depend upon it, he found some time for sleep, and probably, one way or another, had as much of it as was necessary for health.

When he was in London he ruffled it with the fastest of the men about town. He was a member of the *Savoir Vivre Club*, probably the wildest, maddest, rowdiest club that ever existed. "The wicked Lord Lyttelton," whose death was said to have been foretold him in a dream, Charles James Fox, and Richard Brinsley Sheridan were prominent members of this coterie of reckless *farceurs* and *bon viveurs*. The play was of the highest, the wagering and practical joking went beyond all bounds of decency. Fox, perhaps to show his contempt for his club-mates,

fleeced them out of £20,000 one night by the dirtiest wager I have ever heard of. But I do not think the Colonel was much of a gambler. At any rate, like Colonel O'Kelly of Eclipse fame, who, though he had made his fortune by betting and gambling, would allow no gaming in his own house, Thornton would permit no high play at Thornville Royal, albeit in other respects it was as veritable a Liberty Hall as Rabelais' Abbey of Thelema. Nor would he sanction catch-bets made when the wine was in and the wit was out. Over the chimney-piece of the library at Thornville Royal was a marble slab bearing this inscription :

" Utinam, hanc veris amisc impleam !

By the established rule of this house all bets are considered to be off if either of the parties, by letter or otherwise, pay into the hands of the landlord by five o'clock the next day the sum of one guinea."

At a time when the craze for wagering verged upon mania, and gentlemen were ready to back their opinions on the most ridiculous trifles for thousands, especially *after dinner*, such a rule showed both courage and sense in the framer.

No sketch of Colonel Thornton would be complete without some notice of the notorious "Mrs." Thornton, whose equestrian feats created an immense sensation in her day. This lady is constantly referred to as if she had been the legal wife of the Master of Thornville Royal. Even the "Dictionary of National Biography," usually correct in its information, has fallen into this error, and alludes to this "expert equestrienne" as the

Colonel's first wife, "whose maiden name cannot be traced." I am able, however, partly from private sources, partly from a pamphlet by a friend of the Colonel's entitled "Calumny Combated," to throw some light on the history of "the celebrated Mrs. Thornton" who for eight years reigned as mistress at Thornville Royal.

Her name was Alicia Massingham, and she was the daughter of a Norwich watchmaker. The Colonel, I believe, first made her acquaintance when he was marching with his regiment through East Anglia. His brother-officer and Yorkshire neighbour Captain William Flint, one of the boldest riders to hounds in England, and a good all-round sportsman to boot, became at the same time enamoured of Alicia's sister Amelia, and the two girls left home together in company with their lovers.

When they set up their respective establishments in Yorkshire, the two sisters vied with one another in the extravagant splendour of their dress and equipage, and each tried to outshine the other. In beauty they were pretty evenly matched, but Alicia possessed one accomplishment which enabled her to triumph over her sister—she was a splendid horsewoman. Good judges declared that she had no equal in the saddle among the women of her day. Knowing her gift, Alicia was not the sort of woman to hide her light under a bushel, and as she had the pick of Colonel Thornton's large stud of thoroughbreds, she had plenty of opportunities of displaying her horsemanship. The first time she did so in public was at the York August meeting of 1804, when she rode a four-mile match for 1,500 guineas over the Knavesmire

course against Captain Flint. There was such an enormous crowd to witness the match that a squadron of the 6th Light Dragoons was requisitioned to keep the ground. It was the first time in the annals of the Turf that a woman had ever been matched to ride a race in public, and there was a general belief that "the sporting Mrs. Thornton" would ride, man-fashion, in buckskin breeches with jockey's cap and jacket. When, therefore, Alicia appeared on her horse Zingrello, led by Colonel Thornton, it was with considerable disappointment that the excited spectators discovered that she was wearing a lady's habit (leopard-coloured body with blue sleeves and buff skirt), whilst her luxuriant curls were confined beneath a close-fitting cap of blue velvet. She was a very handsome blonde, with a remarkably fine figure which her riding-dress set off to perfection. Captain Flint was attired entirely in white. Alicia took the lead and kept it for three miles, but then her horse unfortunately fell lame. The Captain, who was many lengths behind, came up hand over hand, and, passing his fair rival, cantered in an easy winner. Alicia was furious. She declared that Captain Flint had behaved in the most ungallant and discourteous manner. Apparently she thought that he, as a gentleman, was bound to pull up when he found that her horse had fallen lame. But this was a little too much to expect in a match for 1,500 guineas, with thousands of pounds in bets depending on the result. Alicia challenged her conqueror to a second encounter, but he was so annoyed by the remarks in her published letter that he declined to have anything more to say to her.

Having once tasted notoriety, Alicia could not live without it. She astonished the Londoners by driving through their streets in an extraordinary vehicle shaped like a Thames wherry, drawn by four horses, and so high that she could only reach the box by a step-ladder.

But her crowning feat of sportsmanship was at the York August meeting of 1805, when she was engaged in two matches. In the first, for which the stakes were 2,000 guineas and four hogsheds of claret, her opponent did not appear, and she had a walk over. In the second, for a cup valued at 700 guineas, she rode the Colonel's brown mare Louisa against Mr. Blomfield's chestnut mare Allegra, ridden by the veteran Frank Buckle, the finest jockey of his day. Buckle carried 13 st. 6 lbs., "Mrs." Thornton 9 st. 6 lbs. Alicia, in purple jacket and cap, nankeen skirts, purple sleeves, and embroidered stockings, held the lead for the first mile, when Buckle passed her. Then ensued a splendid race. The two were never more than half a length apart till, within a hundred yards of home, Alicia challenged Buckle in good earnest. The prince of jockeys tried all he knew, but in vain ; and after a magnificent struggle Alicia landed Louisa a winner by half a length. The excitement over this race was extraordinary, and when "Mrs." Thornton and Louisa were led back to scale by the jubilant Colonel, they received a tremendous ovation. Unfortunately Alicia's triumph, the greatest of her life, was marred by a fracas between Colonel Thornton and Captain Flint, who had not been on speaking terms since the match

between the Captain and the lady in the previous year. The Colonel happened to overhear Flint make some disparaging remarks upon "Mrs." Thornton, and strongly resented them. High words passed; the Captain flew into a rage and fiercely flogged the Colonel with his horsewhip. This dastardly assault on a man far older than himself so exasperated the bystanders that they were with difficulty prevented from lynching the assailant on the spot; as it was, even the nobility and gentry present joined in hooting him from the course. He was cut by all his acquaintances, and ended a miserable life a few years later by poison.

Previously to these exploits in the saddle, Alicia, who appears to have been a person of varied accomplishments, with artistic as well as sporting tastes, accompanied the Colonel on a sporting tour through France. This expedition was undertaken in 1802, after the Peace of Amiens, and was on a scarcely less imposing scale than the Scottish tour, for the Master of Thornville Royal took with him an artist, two valets, a gamekeeper, a huntsman, and six couples of fox-hounds. A special carriage of the Colonel's own designing was constructed for the journey. "It was," he says, "remarkably commodious," and enabled him to transport a dozen dogs in boxes upon springs at the front and back of the carriage, whilst the interior of the vehicle contained a secret repository of guns and fishing-tackle. The dickie on which the servants sat could be placed behind or in front at pleasure, whilst a specially constructed light circular box, "placed under

the windows, so as not to derange the symmetrical appearance of the carriage, was designed to preclude those unpleasant bickerings which frequently arise in journies from the multiplicity of the ladies' band-boxes; necessary indeed to the softer sex, but which generally prove very objectionable to gentlemen when travelling."

From a sporting point of view the record of this tour presents little of interest. The sport was of a very mongrel kind. The hounds were laid on to wolves, foxes, boars, and deer indiscriminately, and the quarry was shot down by the sportsmen when hounds were in full cry! Every Frenchman was provided with a huge horn, and the hideous din they made on these instruments to celebrate the death of the game was maddening.

The Colonel distinguished himself as a shot both with gun and rifle, and his wonderful seven-barrelled guns created a sensation. *À propos* of these marvellous weapons I may quote the following passage:

"Joseph Manton, the gunsmith, was of opinion that he could make a double-rifle gun sufficiently stout to carry seven balls each barrel and that they would do more execution than one of my seven-barrelled guns, which were only stout enough to carry three balls each, *i.e.*, twenty-one from the seven barrels. This piece carried very small balls, about the size of what is called buck-shot.

Great pains were taken in hammering the barrel of the new gun, and when it was finished, I went to witness its execution, and resigned to Manton the

honour of making the first experiment, which was to take place in a narrow passage adjoining his shop. He loaded the piece with the utmost exactness, and, by his appearance, he would cheerfully have relinquished the *honour* to me ; but I thought it no more than justice that the inventor should be first gratified. Accordingly he placed himself, and took exact aim ; but the subsequent concussion was so great, and so very different from the firing of any other gun, that I thought the whole shop was blown up, and fully expected, when the smoke dispersed, to find that the piece had burst. This, however, was not the case ; it appeared that the whole force of the powder, being insufficient to drive the balls, had come out through the touch-holes, and, what was very extraordinary, the gun was uninjured.

This circumstance affording an indisputable proof of the excellency of the metal, and the firmness of the touch-holes, we took out the breech, and then gently forced the balls, which had only moved six inches. It was now, therefore, sufficiently obvious that to use this in competition with a seven-barrelled gun was quite out of the question."

When subsequently bored for shot, however, this gun proved very effective, and the Colonel states that one kill he made with it "was *supposed* to have been upwards of a hundred yards"! Had any of those who "supposed" ever stepped out a hundred paces, I wonder?

The Colonel was introduced to Napoleon, then First Consul, who was as affable to him as he had been a month before to Assheton Smith, whom he presented

to his staff with admiration as "le premier chasseur d'Angleterre." The First Consul deigned to accept from the English sportsman a brace of very handsome pistols, and in return showed the Colonel a beautiful fowling-piece which had been made for him at Versailles at a cost of 800 guineas, or nearly double the price which the Marquis of Rockingham paid for a gun which he presented to Colonel Thornton, after seeing him pick off with a single bullet a sparrow which had perched on the top of Wentworth House. I do not know that there is much else worth noting in the Colonel's sporting tour through France, except that he was shocked by the "undress of the French ladies" and the "lasciviousness" of the waltz, to which Byron had an equally strong objection. Colonel Thornton was sure it would never be tolerated in England, the home of domestic purity. This, from a member of the *Savoir Vivre Club* and the "protector" of at least half a dozen ladies of the Alicia Massingham type, is an amusing example of that British prudery which our Continental neighbours are rude enough to call hypocrisy. He notes, too, that skittles was then the favourite pastime of French officers; do they still, I wonder, patronise that plebeian but vigorous pastime?

Towards the close of 1805 the Colonel found himself in "Queer Street," as a natural consequence of his lavish expenditure. He parted with Thornville Royal to Lord Stourton for £226,450. His collection of pictures, valued at £30,000, his choice wines, his horses, his hounds, his deer, his guns, were all sold. But he kept his hawks, the finest in the world. The fair Alicia had

already been taken off his hands by a dashing young naval officer who had come into a fortune. In a certain law-suit, in which a heavy claim of the Colonel's against a foolish young man of property in the neighbourhood was resisted on the ground that the defendant had been cheated, Alicia took a prominent part, and, in letters addressed to the newspapers, reviled her old protector like a very vixen. On reading these effusions the Colonel, I think, must have been thankful that he was well quit of the "Nymph of Norwich."

But Thornton still had his place at Boythorpe, which he had bought from Mr. Bilby in 1791. He had built there, at a cost of £10,000, a handsome house, which he christened Falconer's Hall, with fine stabling, and accommodation for his famous hawks. Situated among the wolds of the East Riding, about twelve miles from Scarborough, Boythorpe afforded excellent scope for coursing and hawking. And there the Colonel held high revel with his friends, varying the sport and festivities by annual sporting excursions to Scotland and occasional visits to London.

In 1806 the Colonel at last took to himself a lawful wife in the person of Miss Eliza Cawston, the daughter of a gentleman farmer of Munden, in Essex. This lady bore him in 1807 a son, William Thomas Thornton, his only legitimate offspring. In the following year Colonel Thornton let Falconer's Hall, and leaving Yorkshire, where the farmers were breaking up the wolds for corn crops, and thus spoiling them for hawking, betook himself to Wiltshire, where he leased Spye Park. Traditions still linger there of the wonderful sport he had with his hawks

During the next five or six years the Colonel appears to have been under a cloud. Robbed by rascally bailiffs, pestered by duns, plagued with writs, the gallant old sportsman nevertheless contrived to live merrily. He sold his house "The Boudoir," in Westminster Road, for fourteen hogsheads of claret, which he removed to a villa in the Edgware Road. There he barricaded himself and stood a siege of nearly two years against an army of bailiffs, still entertaining his friends on Sundays in right royal style.

In 1814, he was over in France again, astonishing the natives with his hounds and hunting establishment. Thenceforward Colonel Thornton lived entirely abroad. In 1817 he obtained a Royal Ordinance permitting him to establish his domicile in France, and securing him the enjoyment of all civil rights so long as he should continue to reside there. He took on lease the chateau of Chambord and bought an estate at Pont-Sur-Seine, which carried with it the title of Marquis, and he used sometimes to sign himself Marquis de Pont. In 1821 he sold this estate to the famous statesman Casimir Périer, and passed the rest of his life in hired apartments in Paris, where the "Falconers' Club," which he had established there, dined every week. A correspondent gives the following sketch of the old sportsman's later years:

"You ask me what I know of old Thornton. I first became acquainted with him in Paris in October, 1822, when I became a member of a club (of which he was the head) who dined together at the Shakespeare—a tavern kept by an old private servant of Colonel T.'s,

one Tillbrook—every Wednesday, when we had a plain English dinner, roast beef, vegetables, and plum pudding, to say nothing of a good sea-coal fire in an iron grate. Two of the most constant attendants were the gallant Sir Sidney Smith and the great (in every sense of the word) traveller Belzoni. Colonel Thornton, though no longer a master of fox-hounds, always dined in a scarlet, straight-cut coat, of the whipper-in style, and his first toast was invariably 'Success to Fox-hunting.' Then came Merlin, a celebrated fox-hound of his, and the blood of old Conqueror; and then, in honour of the pastime of which he was passionately fond, 'Lord Orford and Falconry.' Towards the close of the evening he would give us, in a style to be remembered by many a man of half his age, some hunting songs that transported his listeners into Leicestershire at once."

The same gentleman goes on to defend the Colonel against the charge of what is euphemistically called romancing. Certainly Thornton used to tell some marvellous stories at times,—his friends said he did this merely out of playful humour, to test the credulity of his hearers. Be that as it may, when Charles Mathews, the elder, introduced into one of his entertainments a character by the name of Major Longbow, whose catch phrase was, "'Pon my soul, it ain't a lie, I'll bet a thousand," everyone instantly recognised a lifelike portrait of the veracious Colonel.

Towards the close of the year 1821 the following paragraph made its appearance in the London newspapers: "Lately, after a few days' illness, died the

celebrated Colonel Thornton, of Thornville Royal, in the county of York. He was not only a great sporting celebrity, but was also conspicuous in the field of literature," with further complimentary remarks on the subject of the obituary notice.

His old friend George Hawkins wrote a letter of condolence to Mrs. Thornton, and was considerably astonished at receiving the following reply :

"PARIS, RUE DE LA PAIX.
December 25th, 1821.

MY HONEST BROTHER SPORTSMAN,—

This is Christmas Day, dedicated by me from my youth to gaiety and reasonable hospitality, endeavouring to make all happy according to the situation in which Providence has placed me. In health no man can be more hearty ; but not quite stout in my knees and feet ; stomach invincible ; always an appetite ; eat three times a day—tea, muffins and grated hung-beef at nine ; at two, roasted game or cock's combs, and about a pint of the finest white Burgundy ; dinner at five, and then a bottle of wine and three or four glasses of spirits, rather weak—then to bed ; sleep better than ever I did in my life. Pretty well you will say for a *dead man*. Rise at eight, breakfast at nine ; and so we go on. Every night the finest dreams. I expect some wild boar ; if it comes, our friend B. may be sure of a part.

P.S.—*December 26th.* "I find by the papers that I died after a short illness, much lamented, etc., etc., at Paris. However that may be, I gave a dinner yesterday

to a dozen sportmen. We had roast beef, plum pudding, Yorkshire goose-pie, and sat up singing most gaily till two this morning. At twelve we had two boiled fowls, etc., and finished a bottle of old rum in punch. No intoxication, for I went to bed well, and never rose better."

It has been unkindly hinted that the Colonel himself circulated the report of his own death in order to see what the newspapers would say of him. Lord Brougham was said by his spiteful detractors to have done the same thing. In Thornton's case the libel emanates from persons who brand him as a humbug and a fraud—an estimate of his character against which I most emphatically protest.

Colonel Thornton lived for nearly two years after the newspapers had killed him, and died at last at his rooms in Paris on March 23rd, 1823. His end was sudden, for, but a couple of hours before the fatal seizure, he had ordered out his hounds, and the horse which he was to have mounted was at the door when he breathed his last. He was sixty-six years of age, and had lived every hour of his life.

By his will he left the whole of his property in trust for Thornvillia Diana Rockingham, his natural daughter by his last mistress Priscilla Duins. An attempt was made to upset the will in the English courts on the ground that Colonel Thornton, as a domiciled Frenchman, was subject to the law of France, which did not allow a man to will away the *whole* of his property from his lawful widow and children, or bequeath "an

hereditary portion" to his illegitimate offspring. The lawful widow had been successful in establishing her claim in the French courts, but she failed in the English courts. So Thornvillia Diana Rockingham Thornton, who afterwards married Admiral the Hon. E. T. Wodehouse, inherited all her father's property, to the exclusion of his lawful son. Such is British justice!

I have devoted a considerable amount of space in these pages to Colonel Thornton because I think that, as a sportsman, he has had few equals. There was not a single field sport in which he did not excel. Whatever he did was done royally. Whether he hunted, hawked, fished, coursed, or played the host at Thornville Royal, there was always the grand style about everything. And he threw himself heart and soul into all that he undertook. Let us deal tenderly, then, with the less heroic phases of his life, and remember him only as the lavish entertainer, the jovial comrade, above all, the devoted sportsman who—

Put so much of his heart into his act
That his example had a magnet's force.

Joe Manton

WITH SOME NOTES ON HIS RIVALS

"THE King of Gunmakers"—I suppose no one will deny the claim of Joseph Manton to that title. Doubtless there are gunmakers now who can turn out as fine workmanship as Manton's, but there is no one maker who stands out pre-eminently, a head and shoulders above all rivals, as Joseph Manton did for forty years. For a long while it was a case of "Eclipse first and the rest nowhere." No sportsman thought himself properly equipped without at least one of Manton's guns. He charged what he pleased, and sportsmen paid the price without a murmur, fully satisfied that, whatever the charge might be, they were certain to get their money's worth. That fine all-round sportsman Edward Hayward Budd once heard Manton say, "I shall continue annually to increase my charges five guineas, and still no gentleman will be without a 'Joe Manton.'" Seventy guineas was his charge for a double gun at the height of his fame, and I have never heard of one costing less than fifty guineas. A pair of his patent flint-locks alone cost seven guineas.

Manton may almost be styled the inventor of the double-barrelled gun, for before his time sportsmen invariably shot with single barrels, and regarded the double guns in the same light as Colonel Thornton, "as trifles, rather knick-knacks than useful." Strangely enough, we seem on the eve of coming back to the single barrel ; for there can be little doubt, I think, that the double gun will eventually be superseded by the single magazine gun, which will give the sportsman a rapidity and accuracy of fire far in advance of anything the annals of shooting have hitherto recorded.

I have more than once in these pages referred to the Diary of Nicholas Assheton, of Downham, a typical sporting Lancashire squire of the early part of the seventeenth century. And on looking over his Journal I find one or two entries which prove how terribly cumbersome the firearms of his day were, and what poor sport shooting must have been before the weapons were handy enough to allow of a man's killing his game on the wing :

" November 14th.—Shott at a moorcock, struck feathers off and missed.

November 24th.—Had some sport at moor game with my piece, but killed not."

Once, however, he chronicles with evident pride the fact that he "shott two young hinds." The long-bow was a far deadlier weapon in the hands of a skilled archer, both in sport and war, than the clumsy firelock ; and it is a remarkable fact that for accuracy and rapidity of shooting, no military firearm could compare with the old long-bow of Crecy and Agincourt and

Flodden until the breech-loading rifle was introduced into modern warfare forty years ago.

One would like to know at what period the fowling-piece became sufficiently light and handy to allow of a sportsman shooting game upon the wing. But I can find no data to enable me to fix the commencement of this notable epoch in the history of sport. There can, however, as I have said, be no doubt that Joe Manton was the first gunmaker to make the double barrel popular. Some of his flint-lock doubles which I have seen are marvels of finished and elegant workmanship, and come as readily to the shoulder as any gun I have ever handled. But seventy guineas seems a long price to have paid for them, good as they are. Rich sportsmen, however, were willing to give fancy prices for guns in those days, and Colonel Thornton tells us that a gun which the Marquis of Rockingham presented to him cost 450 guineas! Perhaps, like the rifle which the Duke of York once ordered, the pan and touch-hole were of *gold*! What His Royal Highness paid for that costly toy I do not know, but it fetched fifty guineas at the sale of his effects.

At what date Joe Manton started business in London I have been unable to discover, but his first patent is dated April, 1792, and he was then established at No. 25 Davies Street, Berkeley Square, where his shop, familiar to every sportsman as the dome of St. Paul's, remained till 1825, when he removed to 11, Hanover Square. During this time his brother John, whom some good judges considered little, if at all, inferior to Joseph,

also flourished as a gunmaker at No. 6, Dover Street, Piccadilly. The establishments were entirely independent of one another; and though John enjoyed nothing like the celebrity of his brother, I am inclined to think that in the long run he was the more successful of the two. For, despite his extraordinary fame and his equally extraordinary prices, Joe Manton failed to make his business pay, and in January, 1826, he was gazetted a bankrupt. In those days bankruptcy was looked upon as a disgrace. Insolvents could not pass through the court in the gay and light-hearted manner in which the thing is now done—sometimes half a dozen times in a lifetime. Bankruptcy was a very serious misfortune; and Joe Manton, though there was nothing dishonourable about his failure, never recovered from the blow. He still carried on his business, indeed, migrating to New Road, thence to Burwood Place, and thence to No. 6, Hollis Street, where he finally anchored, and where, after his death, his sons continued the business till 1840, when it was purchased by the two well-known gunmakers Charles and Henry Egg.

Joe Manton died at Maida Vale on June 29th, 1835, and his death is thus referred to by his lifelong friend Colonel Peter Hawker in his Diary:

“Poor Joe Manton—the life and soul of the trade—died and was buried in the cemetery at Kensington. Several epitaphs to his memory were prepared at the request of his family and sporting friends. The one chosen was that which I wrote, and it shall be inserted here—not as an essay with pretensions to merit, but a memorial of justice to departed talent:—

'In memory of Mr. Joseph Manton, who died, universally regretted, on the 29th day of June, 1835, aged 69. This humble tablet is placed here by his afflicted family, merely to mark where are deposited his mortal remains. But an everlasting monument to his unrivalled genius is already established in every quarter of the globe by his celebrity as the greatest artist in fire-arms that ever the world produced, as the founder and the father of the modern gun-trade, and as a scientific inventor in other departments, not only for the benefit of his friends and the sporting world, but for the good of his king and country.'

For some years before his death, poor Joe made many attempts to re-establish himself in business, and such was the *esprit de corps* among his fine army of workmen, that they rallied round him till the last, rather than serve under any director in whose abilities they had less confidence, and who, perhaps, knew not half so much as themselves. His leading man, poor old Asell, the father of the working trade, died in Marylebone hospital; and some time after, his unrivalled barrel-borer, John Hussey, died in distress. Penn, the prince of lock-finishers, died in 1843. But Greenfield, the emperor of mechanics, is in greater force than ever, with a son as clever as himself. He has opened a large factory as an engineer, at No. 10, Broad Street, Golden Square, where he works not only for the trade in general, but also for Her Majesty's service. And his son lately came home from Turin, where he has been putting the Sardinians on their legs by taking out to them the machinery for making copper caps."

A propos of copper caps, the credit of inventing them has been claimed for Joe Manton. How far that claim can be sustained will appear from a passage I shall quote from Colonel Hawker presently. But the discovery of a fulminate by which the percussion principle could be applied to firearms—a discovery which created a revolution in the whole craft of gunmaking—was made, not by a gunmaker, but by an eminent minister of the Scottish Church, the Rev. Alexander John Forsyth. He announced his discovery to the world in 1803, and patented his invention in 1807. But it was not till 1818 that the percussion cap began to come into use among sportsmen; and it was not till *two-and-twenty years later* that our sleepy old War Office awoke to the fact that the flint-lock had everywhere, except in the army, been long superseded by the percussion. Colonel Hawker tells us that Joe Manton, previously to his failure, had shown him “a new patent self-priming detonator,” which had cost him £200. The Colonel, as a practical sportsman, told Manton it would never answer, and he adds: “As some proof that I was right I need only state that this gun was bought at the sale for a mere nothing (Lancaster told me £14), and then, I believe, was discarded by the purchaser.” Whether this failure was Manton’s first contribution to the solution of the problem how best to utilise Dr. Forsyth’s discovery in practical gunmaking, I do not know. But in the ninth edition of his “Instructions to Young Sportsmen,” published in 1844, Colonel Hawker gives the following interesting particulars in further discussion of the subject:



THE FIRST OF SEPTEMBER.—COLONEL HAWKER AND JOE MANTON.

"The copper cap is now in general use all over the world; and therefore many gunmakers attempt to claim the invention as their own.

I do not mean to say that I was the inventor of it—probably not: but this I must beg leave to state:—when Joe first brought out his detonators, in Davies-street (those which were discarded from giving so much trouble), he made me the most perfect gun I ever saw; and doubting whether such another could be got, I set my wits to work in order to simplify the invention. At last the plan of a perforated nipple, and the detonating powder in the crown of a small cap occurred to me. I made a drawing of it, which I took to Joe. After having this explained, he said he would show me something in a few weeks' time; when, lo and behold! there was a rough gun altered precisely on my own plan! His factotum, poor old Asell, assured me that the whole job was done from my drawing. Thus Joe, who led the fashion for all the world, sent out a few copper-cap guns, and I know, with some degree of reluctance. The trade, finding that he had then deviated from his own patent, adopted this plan; and it proved to answer so well that we now see it in general circulation. So much, and no more, have I to say about the wished-for discovery of the copper-cap inventor. But if Mr. This and Mr. That have any fancy to claim the invention they may safely fire their ammunition into all the periodicals they please, as I shall not indulge them with any paper war on the subject."

And yet, oddly enough, Colonel Hawker, the best

sportsman of his day, regarded the introduction of the detonator as ruinous to the gunmakers' trade. Take the following passage :

"As I before recorded, another celebrated man, old Egg has been some time dead, and is succeeded by his son John, who now lives in the Colonnade, Pall Mall. Instead, however, of his "cutting up fat," as was expected, he died like a man of genius ; or, in other words, with his balance on the shady side of the book ! The gunmakers, in short, still remain as I left them—like the frogs without a king ; and as before, complaining bitterly about the dullness of trade. But for this they have to thank their introduction of the detonating system, by which they got caught themselves in the very trap that was laid for their customers. When flint guns were the order of the day, few sporting gentlemen ever thought of using anything but the gun of a first-rate maker, for the simple reason that—on the *goodness of the work* depended the *quickness in firing*, and consequently the *filling of the bag*. But, nowadays, every common fellow in a market town can detonate an old musket and make it shoot as quick as can be wished ; insomuch that all scientific calculations in shooting, *at moderate distances*, are now so simplified that we, every day, meet with jackanapes apprentice boys who can shoot flying and knock down their eight birds out of ten. Formerly shooting required *art and nerve*—now, for tolerable shooting (at all events for the use of *one* barrel) *nerve alone* is sufficient. Formerly a first rate gun was a *sine quâ non* ; now the most that we can call it is a *desideratum* ;

since all guns are now made to fire with nearly equal velocity. Still, however, fortunately for the leading gunmakers, there are yet left many requisites which induce good sportsmen to go to the heads of the trade, *viz.* (1) soundness and perfect safety in guns; (2) the barrels being correctly put together for accurate shooting; (3) the elevation being mathematically true, and raised *strictly in proportion to the length of the barrel*; and (4) the stock being properly cast off to the eye, and well fitted to the hand and shoulder. I say nothing of the balance, because any good carpenter, with some lead and a centre-bit, can regulate this to the shooter's fancy."

These remarks were written when the detonator was comparatively new—that is to say, in the year 1822. I gather, however, from the following passage that the Colonel had considerably modified his ideas twenty years later, despite his half-hearted assertion to the contrary. "Though like the rest of the world," he writes in the ninth edition of his "Instructions to Young Sportsmen," "I have long been kidnapped into the constant use of detonators, still I have no reason to alter the opinion I gave in 1822: and were my time to come over again, I might probably be content with the flint, though I have, of course, as everyone does, shot more accurately and missed fewer quick shots with the detonator."

It seems odd to us of this generation that any sane human being could possibly prefer a flint to a percussion gun. But your middle-aged sportsman is the most conservative of mortals: he abhors every

innovation; and I have known many good sportsmen, who, having been used all their lives to muzzle-loaders, could not or would not see the superiority of the breech-loader, but maintained with their dying breath that the good old muzzle-loader shot straighter and harder than the best breech-loader that ever had been or ever would be invented.

Colonel Hawker, as I have said, was on intimate terms with Joe Manton, who was a good sportsman and an excellent shot, and I cull the following extract from the Colonel's Diary, descriptive of one of Joe's many visits to Longparish:

"September 15th, 1827.—Mr. Childe the artist arrived at Longparish, and Mr. Joseph Manton, preparative to a painting being made of our *partie de chasse*.

17th.—Assembled my myrmidons for one more grand field day, in order to have some of their likenesses. Mr. Childe attended as a strict observer, and Mr. Joseph Manton shot with me. Our united bag was 48 partridges and 1 hare, and we returned some time before the day was over in order that Mr. Childe might complete, by good daylight, the necessary sketches of the group. My share of the bag was 28 partridges, but had I shot entirely by myself, and been able to waive the usual ceremony of shooting in company, and galloped up to all my birds, as heretofore, I am confident I should have killed 30 brace of birds. I therefore calculate that by taking out another sportsman the larder fell 6 brace short; because, to follow birds up, as I ought in this wild country, I must do that which in company would be unsportsmanlike and

ungentlemanlike to whoever was my companion ; and Joe Manton not being one of the quickest movers, either on horseback or on foot, doubly retarded several of the necessary attacks.

18th.—Stayed at home with Mr. Childe to arrange for the disposition of the picture, etc., while a friend and Joe Manton went off shooting. Nothing in 'Hudibras,' or 'Quixote' could be more ludicrously crisp than the result of their day. They were to beat us all by going in a quiet way, and meant to astonish us by showing what could be done by one dog, and a little poaching on our neighbours. But, (yes, but) as the kitchenmaid (and the devil) would have it, the aforesaid dog unhappily fell foul of a tub of buttermilk just before starting, with which he so preposterously blew out his paunch that he was pointing all day, not at birds, but to open both his ports, in order to be relieved of what he had taken in ; and before he was sufficiently in trim to do anything but make his deposits from one port, and cast up his accounts from the other, it was time to come home for dinner, and the finale was a deluge of rain. So much for buttermilk. Joe Manton suspected I had played this trick as a punishment for his challenge ; but I was as innocent of the hoax as they were of the murder of game, they having got but seven birds all day.

19th.—Fifty partridges and 4 hares, besides lost and divided birds, to my own gun and exclusive share in six hours' shooting with Mr. Henry Fellowes, who is one of the quickest, coolest and best sportsmen I ever entered a field with. He had a rascally gun

that quite spoiled his shooting, though I could see he was a good shot. Had it not been for this, I daresay we should have killed 100 birds in the six hours, notwithstanding we had a very wild windy day, and a pelting storm just in our best shooting, which spoiled the ground for at least an hour after it had ceased. We had only one gun each. Joe Manton, Mr. Childe, and L—— hung on our leeward flank, and got 11 brace and 1 hare.

20th.—Joe Manton left us to-day for town highly delighted and astonished with what he had seen."

The illustration here reproduced represents Colonel Hawker and his guests on their return from the day's shooting. The centre figure is the Colonel, and Manton stands in front of him slightly to the left.

That Colonel Hawker was an enthusiastic admirer of Joe Manton as a gunmaker is apparent from the epitaph I have already quoted. He never changed his opinion, but to the last declared that if anyone would look "(not with the naked eye but with a magnifying glass) at the work in every part of Joseph Manton's guns and at those of most other makers, he will discover about the same difference that there is between one of our best new town-built coaches and that Gothic vehicle which among our moderns is yclept a Jarvey."

The number of patents which Joe Manton took out for improvements in firearms was so large that I have no space to enumerate them. There was one notable invention of his, however, which deserves a word of mention, if only for the scurvy treatment he received from the War Office in connection with it. It was

a patent for the rifling and improved loading of cannon. A cup made of alder, or any very soft wood, so turned as partially to receive the ball, kept it steady in its passage through the calibre of the piece, acting also as a circular wedge which stopped the windage. Into the soft wood of the cup the threads of the rifling were indented, and the iron ball was thus prevented from injuring the sides of a brass gun by grazing them, and the thick bottom of the cup also served as a wadding to the cartridge. The experiments, made at the inventor's expense, were so successful that the Duke of Richmond, then Master of the Ordnance, publicly announced that the Government intended to purchase the invention, and by that announcement prevented Joe from taking out his patent in the usual way. And what do you suppose they offered the inventor for the invention of which they thought so highly? The munificent sum of £500, about half of what Manton had expended in perfecting and testing his invention!! Needless to say, Joseph declined the generous offer. "Very well," said the Duke of Richmond, "if you don't choose to take the sum we offer, you may get out your patent as you can." And, remember, Manton was expected to give up his secret, stock, lock, and barrel, to the authorities at Woolwich, and forgo any further profit for that absurd remuneration! Of all the many shabby acts of which the War Office has been guilty towards inventors, that, I think, is about the shabbiest.

Before I part from Joe Manton there is one good story of which he is the hero worth telling. When Joe

was crossing Hounslow Heath in a chaise late one winter's afternoon, he was stopped by a highwayman. On hearing the summons to "stand and deliver," Manton looked hastily out of the window and recognised a pistol of his own make levelled at his head. "Why damn it, you rascal," cried the indignant gunmaker, "I'm Joe Manton, and that's one of my pistols you've got. How dare you try to rob me!"

"Oh! you're Joe Manton, are you?" said the highwayman coolly. "Well, you charged me ten guineas for this brace of pistols, which I call a damned swindle, though I admit they're a good pair of barkers. Now I mean to be quits with you. Hand me over ten guineas, and I'll let you go because you're Joe Manton, though I know you've got fifty pounds at least about you!"

Joseph swallowed his wrath and promptly paid the ten guineas. But he never forgave the highwayman for getting a brace of his best pistols for nix, and he made himself a special double gun, with barrels barely two feet long, which he always carried about with him afterwards when travelling, and christened "The Highwayman's Master." With this weapon I have heard that he subsequently shot a highwayman who stopped his chaise and mortally wounded him.

I have mentioned in passing one or two of Joe Manton's rivals in the gun-trade, but there was one who deserves a more extended notice.

When Colonel Hawker once asked Manton who was the next best maker to himself, Joe's reply was, "Purdey gets up the best work next to mine." And no doubt

that was the general opinion. But Birmingham thought otherwise, and ranked her Westley Richards as second to none. That famous maker had as his London representative in Bond Street a man whose name was familiar as a household word in the mouths of all the sportsmen of the metropolis, but especially such as patronised "The Fancy." "Uncle Bishop," or "The Bishop of Bond Street," as he was humorously dubbed, was one of the best-known men in London. The Prize Ring was his pet hobby, and pugilism had no more liberal and ardent patron than this jovial gunmaker. When Corinthians wanted to see a "merry mill" they were glad to put themselves under "the Bishop's" wing, for not only were they safe from robbery, but they were sure to be generously catered for. "The Bishop's" hampers on these occasions were always carefully packed and contained the choicest wines and comestibles. And he had his reward. For it soon became an acknowledged fact that the best man in London to supply a good gun at a few hours' notice was Bishop, and in this way the guns of Westley Richards found their way into the hands of some of the most aristocratic sportsmen in the West End. I do not know when Bishop died, but I think he lived to see the ignominious death of the Prize Ring and a change in London life which must have saddened his jolly spirit. It was a peculiarity of Bishop that he always wore an apron in his shop and was never seen without it on his own premises. And no one would have guessed from his deferential manner to his customers that he had been up roystering with swells of the first water till long after

cockcrow, nor did he ever suffer any allusion to these pastimes of his leisure to escape him in his shop, even when his customer happened to be one of the late companions of his revels. There may have been just the suspicion of a humorous gleam in the corner of his eye, but no more, and his customers always respected his wish that nothing but business should be talked in the shop, so that there should be none of the familiarity which breeds contempt.

In the portrait given herewith William Bishop is represented in the act of selling a Westley Richards to one of his old patrons. The hat, with its sporting cock, was the symbol of his independence as the apron was of his business. He always wore both in the shop to let the world know that a tradesman could be civil without being servile.

Like all true sportsmen, William Bishop detested carelessness in the handling of firearms. The constant accidents attributable to such carelessness provoked him to issue in 1856 a pamphlet entitled "Caution as to the use of Firearms," in which he pointed out forcibly and sensibly the sins of some so-called sportsmen in this respect, and urged the compulsory usage of certain simple rules in all shooting parties which would render accidents almost impossible. His comments on the Cockney boobies who lark with fire arms loaded or unloaded were severe and caustic, and are as applicable now as then to certain "bounders" who should be entrusted with no weapon more lethal than a pop-gun.

The jovial gunmaker was also a recognised authority



"THE BISHOP OF BOND STREET."

on all canine matters. He had probably no superior as a dog-fancier, and, to quote a sporting paper of the time, "his canine *levées* are always attended by the *élite* of the sporting world." It was mainly through the indefatigable exertions of "the Bishop of Bond Street" that an important Act for the legal protection of dogs was passed, still known, I believe, as "Bishop's Act." At the time when Bishop took the matter up, dog-stealing had reached such a pitch that no one could keep a valuable dog without having it constantly stolen and being the chronic victim of an impudent system of blackmailing. But "Bishop's Act" put an effectual check on these nefarious practices, for it hit both the thief and the receiver, and the jolly gunsmith thereby earned the gratitude of every dog-owner in the kingdom.

The Rev. William Barker Daniel

LAYMEN have ever had a kindly feeling for the sporting parson, though, if the truth must be told, he has not always been a credit to his cloth or an ornament to society. The jolly, shovel-hatted rector who loved port wine and a good dinner, who was not ashamed to patronise a prize-fight or a cocking match, and was more at home on the racecourse or in the hunting-field than at a religious meeting or a clerical conference, who could swear, if need be, a good, round, honest oath, and whose wife wrote his sermons for him, was a popular personage a hundred years ago and less. Thackeray has drawn his portrait in the Rev. Bute Crawley, and one likes the man, at any rate, far better than that evangelical prig his nephew, the correct and loathsomely respectable Mr. Pitt Crawley. In an age when manners were coarse and morals lax, it soothed the consciences of easy-going folks to have clerical countenance for their pet vices, to feel that their spiritual pastors were—

creatures not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food,

but full-blooded mortals who could eat and drink and shoot and hunt and fish and fight and swear with the

best, or worst, of the laity. I am not sure that the parson who could hold his own at all these pastimes with the doughtiest was not regarded with more reverence and respect than he could have commanded by the most blameless and saintly life.

In that wonderfully graphic picture of the fox-hunters' orgies which James Thomson gives in "The Seasons," the hero of those drunken revels, when all the rest are stretched upon the floor "drench'd in potent sleep till morn," is the sporting parson :

Perhaps some Doctor of tremendous paunch,
Awful and deep, a black abyss of drink,
Outlives them all : and from his buried flock
Retiring, full of rumination sad,
Laments the weakness of these later times.

Not a creditable triumph, you will say. Well, perhaps not ; but still, in an age when manliness was measured by the standard of capacity for liquor, the man, cleric or lay, who could put away more than his fellows without losing his reason was a man looked up to with respect, not to say reverence ; and Thomson's reverend doctor may have utilised the influence thus gained to work out some good purposes of his own. Who knows? Let us, at any rate, give him the benefit of the suggestion.

For my own part, I confess that I find it difficult to feel any tolerance for sporting parsons of the type of Bate Dudley, the fighting editor of the *Morning Post*, though he was a baronet to boot ; or Parson Ambrose, the rector of Bletchley, who never missed a prize-fight ; or the notorious "Billy Butler," rector of Frampton, in

Dorset, who went cub-hunting on Sunday mornings, and rode up breathless to the church door just in time for Matins, who fought mains of cocks at the Rectory directly divine service was over, and trotted about on his old nag with a retriever at his heels, poaching his neighbours' pheasants in a way which I can only call blackguardly. Parson Griff Lloyd, Fellow of All Souls' and rector of Christleton, was not very much better, though the "Druid" has thrown the ægis of his eulogy over him. Griff would put off christening, marriage, or burial rather than miss his favourite sport, when—

A southerly wind and a cloudy sky
Proclaimed it a hunting morning;

and if the meet were a distant one on a Monday morning, he would calmly dispense with evening service on the Sunday. The best one can say of him is that he was a good sportsman but a bad parson.

But it is men like "Jack" Russell, of Devon, that reconcile us to the idea of the sporting parson. For that great "king of the hunting-field" was ever mindful of the claims of his calling and never let his sport interfere with his duty. No one ever heard an oath pass his lips, nor any expression at variance with his sacred vocation. He set a grand example of manners, morals, and religion to his parishioners, and showed the world at large how it was possible for a beneficed clergyman to be an enthusiastic follower of sport without compromising his character as a devout and zealous Christian minister.

Then, again, who but the most intolerant of Puritans could find fault with Charles Kingsley for his love of sport? What sportsman is there who has read "My Winter Garden" or "Chalk Stream Studies" and not felt that the sports he loves have derived a fresh dignity from the fact that a man so good and earnest as Charles Kingsley loved them and praised them?

Some of the best and kindest men I have ever met have been sport-loving parsons. I shall always cherish a grateful memory of one tall, grave, iron-armed Yorkshire clergyman, who taught me the art of fly-fishing, and who could throw a fly with a delicacy and dexterity which I have never seen surpassed. Another of the cloth, too, I shall ever remember with affection and respect—a grand old Manx giant, as noble a specimen of stalwart manhood as I have ever seen, the very type and model of a country parson, homely and gentle and strong, the beloved guide and comforter of all his widely scattered flock. A true sportsman, too! How his eye would brighten and his honest, ruddy, kindly face light up with interest as we "boys" showed him the snipe or woodcock we had shot! And when he was tramping across marsh and moor to visit the sick among the mountains, how he would delight to meet us, take one of our guns for a brief spell, and show us that his right hand had not forgotten its cunning, nor his eye lost its quickness by knocking over a snipe or two, or maybe a cock, in a style that made us feel that we had yet much to learn in the art of shooting!

These discursive remarks on sporting parsons in general will, I hope, be tolerated as an introduction to

the one sporting parson in particular whose knowledge of sport and great experience with dog and gun entitle him to a place in these pages—to wit, the Reverend William Barker Daniel, author of “Rural Sports.” I am afraid that I cannot rank the Reverend William Barker Daniel among those sporting parsons who were models of clerical propriety as well as experts with rod and gun. But as he was never a beneficed clergyman, his orders sat lightly on him, and he, at any rate, did nothing, so far as I can discover, to disgrace them.

Mr. John Sargeaunt, in his admirable little history of the famous Essex Grammar School, Felsted, devotes the following paragraph to Parson Daniel, who was educated there :

“If Felsted can claim, in Dr. Townson, one of the most learned of English Divines, we must not from any fear of the contrast omit the name of one of the most eccentric of clerics. Whence Daniel came we do not know, but as a precocious schoolboy of ten summers or thereabouts, he recited an English copy of verses at the Felsted Speech Day in 1763. He left school some time later, and went no man knows whither. He was nearly thirty when he appeared at Cambridge, where he graduated in 1787. It is probable that he had been on sporting bent, and when he took orders he did not lay aside his gun. He held no benefice, and the only recorded occasion whereon he preached is the Felsted Feast Day in 1792. Nine years later he published the work on which his reputation rests. He called it ‘Rural Sports,’ and it ran through several editions in a short



THE REV. WILLIAM BARKER DANIEL.

time. Old sportsmen are still to be found in whose eyes there are but two books, the Bible and 'Rural Sports.' However, the profits of the work were not large enough to recoup the cost whereby the writer had gained his experience. Daniel found it necessary to confine himself to the limits of the King's Bench. Stung with the charge that he was but a Nimrod in prunella, or hopeful of more gains from a fresh venture, he published from his prison some 'Thoughts on the Lord's Prayer.' His training had not fitted him for religious literature, and none but a biographer could now read his discourses. He died in 1833, being as was supposed four-score years of age."

I am able, however, from researches elsewhere, to supply some additional information which had evidently not been brought to Mr. Sargeaunt's knowledge. Daniel was born at Colchester in the year 1753, and was the son of William Daniel, Esquire, presumably a gentleman of some position and property. On leaving Felsted in 1771, William Barker was entered at Christ College, Cambridge, as a pensioner, being then eighteen years of age. His name appears to have been removed from the books of the college after two years of residence, for what reason is not stated. But he was readmitted on September 6th, 1785, took his B.A. degree in 1787 and his M.A. in 1790. He was then ordained, but as his name does not appear among the list of beneficed clergy in Gilbert's *Ecclesiastical Directory*, published in 1829, it has been conjectured that he never held any cure. In a letter addressed to the editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine* for July, 1802, he is made the

subject of the following scathing remarks by an anonymous correspondent :

“ Among the attachments to your cover is an advertisement of ‘Rural Sports,’ by W. B. [William Barker] Daniel. This author is a clergyman, and if I mistake not, M.A. of Christ College, Cambridge, though he seems unwilling to own his title to either character. Perhaps there is a peculiar propriety in such *renunciation* ; for where is the consistency between being a fisher of men and a hunter of beasts? Whether he has attained to a benefice, or ever performed the duties of his clerical function, let him answer to the fathers of the Church. I cannot help thinking he is fitter to act the character of Nimrod than that of a dignitary in the Church of England ; for in the Church of Christ there are no dignitaries.”

The editor, however, who probably knew Daniel, did not wholly endorse this view of his character, for he appends the following note : “ Our correspondent will here, perhaps, be thought a little too fastidious.”

Beyond what is to be gleaned from his personal experiences given in “Rural Sports,” which show that among the most eminent sportsmen of his day he was held in high esteem, there is no record of any event in Daniel’s life. But I find the following among the deaths in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* for June, 1833 : “ In Garden Row, within the rules of the King’s Bench, where he had resided for the last twenty years, the Rev. William Barker Daniel, the author of ‘Rural Sports.’ He was of Christ’s College, Cambridge, B.A. 1787, M.A. 1790.”

Mr. Sargeant, it will be noted, attributes Daniel's insolvency to losses incurred over the publication of "Rural Sports"; but the *Sporting Magazine* in its obituary notice states that the Rev. Mr. Daniel's confinement within the rules of the King's Bench Prison was owing to his litigious propensities, which involved him in costs which he either could not or would not pay. No doubt he was able to secure a "day rule" pretty frequently during the shooting season, which would permit him to enjoy his favourite sport and get back to Garden Row before midnight.

That Parson Daniel was a first-rate sportsman and was highly esteemed among his contemporaries as an authority, especially on all matters connected with shooting and the dogs used in that sport, is manifest from the internal evidence afforded by his great book "Rural Sports." Published in 1807, it was the first work of its kind, and all that binder, printer, and engraver could do to turn it out handsomely was done. The illustrations are for the most part excellent, and the three volumes are a very creditable monument to the publisher's taste and the printer's craftsmanship.

The Dedication, to J. Holden Strutt, Esq., runs thus : "Two motives impel me to dedicate to you the following pages : the remembrance of that steady friendship with which you have honoured me, and the satisfaction derived from the many days in which you promoted, and wherein we have together enjoyed, the pleasures of the Chase." Whilst frankly acknowledging that a large portion of the contents is compiled from various publications, he adds : "It can safely be asserted, however, that

the fresh matter is considerable, and that the whole is arranged on a novel and distinct system."

Of fishing in its higher branches I do not think that Daniel had much personal experience. He evidently had a partiality for net-fishing, a thing abhorrent to your true angler, for he states with pride that few men have seen more of practical net-fishing than himself, and discourses most learnedly on the various kinds of nets to be used. Amongst the coarser fish he seems to be at home, for he tells us of his bream-fishing at New Hall Pond, Essex, where, on a cloudy day with the wind brisk, he and four friends took "some hundred weight, averaging 2 lbs., the bait used being large red worm." He also records the wonderful success he had with tench by adopting the plan of *dipping the worm in tar*. Has any modern angler, I wonder, tried that singular bait which Daniel says he found the tench take eagerly?

One comes across some curious bits of angling lore in his pages. Thus we are told that in Malham Water, near Settle, in Yorkshire, the perch reach the weight of 5 lbs. and upwards, "*all blind of one or both eyes*." The trout in Driffield Beck, in the East Riding, are not only numerous, but "the fish seldom weigh less than 2 lbs., and frequently *five or six*." Of the Thames we read that it "produces salmon (though not in abundance), which are generally taken about Isleworth: these bear a most extravagant price in the London markets, having been sold at twelve shillings per pound: eight shillings and half a guinea are frequently given; five shillings is the average, because being caught so

near London they do not lose their flavour by carriage." Does any Londoner nowadays know what the flavour of salmon or any other fish—turbot, say—really is? I doubt it. For no fish retains its true flavour after it has been half a dozen hours out of the water, whether salt or fresh.

But it is when he comes to treat of shooting that Parson Daniel is most at home. Take, for example, the following remarks on spaniels, based on the author's personal experience :

"Upon no account accept or keep a Spaniel (it is needless to tell a sportsman not to breed from) which has any taint of the hound in his pedigree, although for generations back ; they will be sure to hunt hare in preference to winged game, and the stock may be crossed everlastingly, may attain beauty, strength, symmetry ; yet this latent spark of the harrier will never be extinguished, and they will always show their predilection for hare, whenever they have an opportunity,—and this generally happens when their goodness is most required, namely in coverts where the winged game is preserved, and there, for the most part, hares are also in the greatest plenty. A stronger instance could not well be exhibited than in the spaniels of Lord Waltham and Mr. Hoare : a road only parted the seats of those two gentlemen, and their gamekeepers frequently shot in the woods together ; their dogs were equally handsome, but those of the former would drive hares the day through, and consequently sprung everything that accidentally lay in their course ; whilst those of the latter no more ran hares than they did sheep ; they

would indeed find the hares but follow no farther than they saw them: they were always in their places, twisting around every stub with that agility, and possessed such fineness of nose that neither woodcock nor pheasant could escape their search. Lord Waltham's Spaniel Bitches had originally a cross of the beagle, and although this was tried to be remedied by resorting to the best dogs, the tendency to hare could never be subdued."

The Compiler's spaniels were so very excellent that he was once desired to fix his own price upon six brace and a half, after being offered one hundred and fifty guineas for them. He had, many years previous, purchased at various times, at least four score spaniels, all with the best of characters, but which, with the exception of four brace, were regularly consigned to the halter for incorrigible hare-hunting; nor would he ever have got them to his wish, but by procuring Mr. Hoare's after that gentleman's decease: those with an increased attention to obtain any cross that could improve them, had rendered them superior to most. Amidst a great abundance of hares in all the manors he preserved, he had at one time in his possession six brace of spaniels that would not individually or collectively run a hare thirty yards; it will readily be supposed with such dogs he could not fail of finding all the game that any covert contained; he seldom lost a wounded bird, nor (unless in the pursuit of a winged pheasant, when they sometimes laid hold of his tail feathers, which, from his rapid running he left in their mouths) did his spaniels ever break or rumple their game."

Of the intelligence of the dogs broken in by himself, he gives the following instance :

"I once had a pointer that would always go round close to the hedges of a field before he would quarter his ground : the dog was sensible that he most frequently found his game in the course of this circuit, and therefore very naturally took the readiest road to discover it. A setter to whom I had shot for three seasons once left me when shooting in a country distant from home, and returned to the inn which we had set out from that morning. I had fired seven or eight times without dropping a bird, and have no doubt but my want of skill occasioned Sancho's distaste, for after riding back to the inn, to which he had returned, and again taking him into the field, he soon gave me an opportunity of regaining his confidence, and for seventeen successive shots not a bird was missed. A perfect reconciliation was the consequence."

But the most extraordinary incident in connection with shooting which Daniel gives is the following account of a pig which was trained to point. I give the remarkable story in full :

"Of this most extraordinary animal, will be here stated a short history, to the veracity of which there are hundreds of living witnesses. SLUT was bred in, and was of that sort which maintain themselves in the New Forest without regular feeding, except when they have young, and then but for a few weeks, and was given when but about three months old, to be a breeding sow, by Mr. Thomas, to Mr. Richard Toomer, both at that time keepers in the Forest. From having no young she

was not fed, or taken very little notice of, until about eighteen months old, was seldom observed near the lodge, but chanced to be seen one day when Mr. Edward Toomer was there. The brothers were concerned together in breaking pointers and setters, some of their own breeding, and others which were sent to be broke by different gentlemen; of the latter, although they would *stand* and *back*, many were so indifferent that they would neither hunt nor express any satisfaction when birds were killed and put before them. The slackness in these dogs first suggested the idea that any other animal might be made to stand, and do as well as one of those huntless and inactive pointers. At this instant the sow passed by, and was remarked as being extremely handsome. R. Toomer threw her a piece or two of oatmeal roll, for which she appeared grateful, and approached very near; from that time they were determined to make a Sporting Pig of her. The first step was to give her a name, and that of SLUT (given in consequence of soiling herself in a bog) she acknowledged in the course of the day, and never afterwards forgot. Within a fortnight she would find and point partridges and rabbits; and her training was much forwarded by the abundance of both which were near the lodge; she daily improved, and in a few weeks would retrieve birds that had ran, as well as the best pointer; nay, her nose was superior to any pointer they ever possessed, and no two men in England had better. They hunted her principally on the moors and heaths. Slut had stood Partridges, Black Game, Pheasants, Snipes and Rabbits in the same day, but was never known to

point a hare. She was seldom taken by choice more than a mile or two from the Lodge, but has frequently joined them when out with their pointers, and continued with them several hours. She has sometimes stood a jack-snipe when all the pointers had passed it by ; she would back the dogs when they pointed, but the dogs refused to back her until spoke to, their dogs being all trained to make a general halt when the word was given, whether any dog pointed or not ; so that she has been frequently standing in the midst of a field of pointers. In consequence of the dogs not liking to hunt when she was with them, (for they dropped their sterns, and showed symptoms of jealousy), she did not very often accompany them, except for the novelty ; or when she accidentally joined them in the forest. Her pace was mostly a trot, was seldom known to gallop, except when called to go out shooting, she would then come home off the forest at full stretch (for she was never shut up, but to prevent her being out of the sound of the call or whistle, when a party of gentlemen had appointed to see her out the next day, and which call she obeyed as readily as a dog), and be as much elevated as a dog upon being shown the gun. She always expressed great pleasure when game, either dead or alive, was placed before her. She has frequently stood a single partridge at forty yards' distance, her nose in a direct line to the bird ; after standing some considerable time she would drop like a setter, still keeping her nose in an exact line, and would continue in that position until the game moved : if it took wing, she would come up to the place and put her nose down two

or three times ; but if a bird ran off she would get up and go to the place, and draw slowly after it, and when the bird stopped she would stand it as before."

The most interesting and valuable portion of Daniel's observations on shooting is undoubtedly that which treats of wild-fowling—a branch of the sport to which no writer before his time had devoted anything like the attention it deserves. It will interest even modern wild-fowlers to read the following sketch of a famous master of the art to whom Daniel was indebted for much of his knowledge of the subject :

"Should any Cambridge man who was a fen-shooter, thirty years ago, honour this book with his perusal, he will not wonder at seeing the name of Old Merry, of Stretham Ferry, mentioned as a truly scientific conductor of this kind of sporting.

In his knowledge of the haunts of the different species of birds which visited the fens, he was most precise ; and in the navigation of his punt (a small boat) along the ditches, which are in fact the only roads through the fens, his judgment and assiduity were alike conspicuous : he knew if a drought had lowered the water where he could make good his point ; and frequently, whilst shooting parties with other guides were wearying themselves with *towing*, or from the noise occasioned by being towed all the birds in the vicinity were disturbed, Old Merry was steering his punt silently to the scene of action ; and in the fogs, which are so thick as to exclude objects at the smallest distance, or in the dark, he was equally collected, and knew how to proceed in the morning

or return at night, in spite of all obstacles. As a marksman he was extraordinarily expert; with a gun upwards of six feet in the barrel, and that placed in its stock by the village carpenter, and altogether of a weight which none but the most powerful arm could extend and elevate, would he kill a snipe flying. Before exhibiting this proof of dexterity he usually requested to be supplied with a fresh charge, in lieu of what he threw away (as he termed it) after so worthless a bird: the charge of this *demi-culverin* was two pipes and a half of powder and three of shot, and the wadding was a little dry sedge, of which he always took a whisp in the punt. At wild fowl, either single or in trips, he was a fatal shot; from long habit his eye and ear were both singularly keen at the approach of wild fowl in their flight, and his gun generally verified the truth of this observation, when fired at them in the twilight, or in the fogs; and for the most part his caution to look out at the coming of the birds was so exact, that no person could well complain of want of shots, if they obeyed his directions; his knowledge (either from the wind, or from some other cause) in seeing the wild-fowl fly, to what particular spot they would direct their course, was accurate, and his punt was certain to be either in a direction to intercept them in their flight, or to be concealed in the reeds close to where they assembled to feed at eve or morning. Old Merry had not been much troubled with education; rude as the country in which his occupation lay, he possessed, perhaps like that, materials which would have received and

well requited the labour of cultivation ; he had an innate civility and evenness of temper, which very few could ruffle, always preserving the most unassuming behaviour ; and whilst reciting a fund of fen-shooting anecdotes was ever indefatigable in procuring amusement for his employers.

One circumstance happened in the course of our shooting acquaintance, which, however it may evince Old Merry's attachment to his dog, might have been attended with serious consequences. This favourite dog was of the old English water-spaniel kind, and constantly went with his master, to whom he used to bring coots and wild-ducks when moulting, or the young flappers in astonishing quantities. One afternoon the dog showed symptoms of being unwell, refused the food offered him, took no notice of the birds as usual and scarcely roused himself at the discharge of the guns. Upon our return, the dog was at one end of the punt, and the howl it almost incessantly uttered, added to the darkness of the evening, and the reflections upon the cause by which these howlings were produced, rendered it as unpleasant a voyage as was ever made ; for Merry made no doubt but that the dog was *going mad*, and meant to secure and administer some never-failing remedy as soon as he got him home ; the dog, however, frustrated his intention, for when landed at the house, he directly set off, and what became of him was never discovered."

Mr. Stuart-Wortley and other expert gunners of the present day maintain that pigeon-shooting now is very different from what it used to be, that the birds are far

wilder and more difficult to hit, and that the modern pigeon-shot is far superior to his predecessors. But even he, I think, will be a little staggered by the following remarkable exploits chronicled by Parson Daniel :

“ In pigeon shooting, the most wonderful performance was by Mr. Richard Toomer (the person before mentioned as having broke a sow to stand game), who for a considerable wager shot six pigeons out of ten with a single ball.

Of this extraordinary man's, and his brother Edward's excellence in shooting, the following facts are most decisive evidence :—They have been known to shoot at pigeons from the trap with their rifles and a single ball, and to kill eight birds out of twelve, shooting alternately, and one of the pigeons that did not drop had its leg carried off by the ball. They have likewise with a single shot struck twice out of four shots, a cricket-ball thrown into the air ; and Mr. R. Toomer, near Hartford Bridge, with his gun loaded with shot, hit the ball twelve times between the wickets, when bowled by Harris, one of the sharpest bowlers in England. This he himself considered a very good performance. So thoroughly was shooting both with gun and pistols reduced to a science by the two brothers, that numbers of gentlemen became their pupils, and received instruction from them : nor was their knowledge confined merely to the use and effect of the gun ; in hunting and fishing they were equally well experienced. To Mr. R. Toomer's activity and resolution in securing some of the most desperate

deer-stealers and poachers that infested the New Forest, the noblemen and gentlemen concerned in the preservation of the Deer and Game in that district, can bear abundant Testimony.

The exploits which Mr. R. Toomer performed in shooting with such apparent ease soon convinced the persons who saw them that they were done methodically; and this was completely ascertained, by his frequently suffering himself to be blinded with a double handkerchief over his eyes, after having taken his aim, and then to fire and hit a small object. Some little time previous to his death, he went to Moyles Court, near Ringwood, for a day's rook-shooting; he made some trifling bet with Mr. Mist that he killed more birds with his rifle and a single ball than Mr. Mist did with his fowling-piece and shot. The number of shots was limited to twenty. Mr. T. killed *every* shot, Mr. M. nineteen; the latter expressed his surprise at the event, remarking that as the trees were very lofty, Mr. T.'s eyesight must be superior to that of others. Mr. T.'s answer was, 'I will convince you, my friend, there is not such extraordinary eyesight required, and that what you have seen is not so difficult as you imagine': he selected a rook, levelled his rifle, and then desired Mr. Mist to tie a handkerchief over his eyes, so that he was in perfect darkness. After this was done, he fired and brought down the bird; he reloaded and repeated this a second time with the same effect, to the astonishment of many spectators. Mr. T. was satisfied that birds might be readily killed flying with a single ball, if the lock of the gun was not too large,

and the spring so tempered that the main-spring and that of the hammer acted in concert, and that the fire was emitted freely, and the explosion of course be instantaneous at the stroke of the flint. In improving gunpowder as to its quickness in firing, Mr. Toomer, after visiting different powder-mills, and trying experiments in various parts of the process whilst making, had completely succeeded ; the secret now remains in the family, and a considerable advantage is made of the sale of the powder so prepared ; but it was not firearms exclusively that Mr. T. was so expertly versed in ; the air-gun had from him received many improvements ; he has killed fifty brace of bucks in one season with his air-gun, and was busied in adding to its further utility at the time when he died, which was at the early age of thirty-seven years, extremely lamented by all who knew him.

A singular proof of skill in pigeon-shooting was effected by Mr. Elliott, at Rudgwick in Sussex, who undertook to kill fifty pigeons at fifty shots ; it was decided at Tillington near Petworth, and, notwithstanding the wind was high, he killed forty-five : it was allowed he hit every bird, and that he would have succeeded but for the above circumstance. He had but one gun, the touch-hole of which fairly melted."

Scarcely less remarkable are two instances which Daniel gives of the performances of a couple of crack game-shots, both of which feats he witnessed. A Mr. Jenkins, of Petworth, killed twenty brace of birds in forty shots, and in four days' shooting never missed once. Cottingham, Lord Rous's keeper, when out with

Daniel, killed with forty-three consecutive shots at partridge, pheasant, woodcock, and hare.

The parson also tells us that in November, 1801, Sir Wilfrid Lawson's keeper "*killed sixteen woodcock at a shot*, and to make the miracle still stranger, one of the unfortunate birds was of a light yellow colour with *yellow legs*"! This is a feat of which one would have liked to learn some further particulars. As it stands in that bald statement, one may be permitted to doubt its veracity, despite the circumstantial detail of the yellow legs. I can believe the statement that the Duke of Marlborough's keeper once killed twenty-two snipe at a single shot, because I have done some execution myself upon a big whisp of snipe, rising suddenly like a flock of starlings, but sixteen woodcock at a shot——!!!

As a set-off to these miraculous feats of shooting, take the following instances of almost equally remarkable bad shooting. In 1806 four gentlemen of Camberwell competed in a five-guinea pigeon sweepstake, twelve birds apiece. Each man fancied himself as a shot, and there was heavy betting on the issue of the match. But not a single bird was killed by any one of the four! For the absolutely worst shoot on record, however, commend me to the following, which took place in 1788:

"On the day before one of the annual parties at Clumber broke up, two sets went out, each consisting of three persons, and a bet was laid which should kill most game. It was computed that, on an average, each man of the six got *sixty* shots: total, 360. The winning Triumvirate killed **THREE** birds! The shooters were,

Lord Lincoln, General Philips, Captain (afterwards General) Lascelles, Rev. Mr. Lascelles, Mr. Cotton, and Lieut-Colonel Strickland. Here the Game had a complete Triumph over their Adversaries."

On the subject of "big bags" Parson Daniel held strong views, but he shows by some very interesting statistics that foreigners were in his day far worse sinners in this respect than English sportsmen. At Chantilly, under the *régime* of the Prince de Condé, who kept an enormous establishment of 500 servants, 500 horses, and 80 couples of sporting dogs, 54,878 head of game were killed in a single season. It is also stated that twelve guns on the Prince Lichtenstein's estate killed in fourteen hours on an October day in 1777 "39,000 (*sic*) head of game, chiefly hares and partridges." Of course an "o" too many has slipped in there, but even with that important alteration the figures are remarkable for days of flint-locks and single barrels.

"In 1801," writes Mr. Daniel, "Mr. Coke, who is perhaps the very best shot in England, killed in five days 726 partridges: surely the number of discharges must *deafen* the operator, putting the destruction out of the question: and Mr. Coke is so expert a marksman that as he inflicts death whenever he pulls the trigger, he should in mercy forbear such terrible examples of his skill." What would our excellent parson have thought of the Maharajah Dhuleep Singh, who killed 740 partridges to his own gun in a single September day! I am sure, however, that no sportsman of to-day, however insatiable his lust for slaughter, would be guilty of such revolting barbarity as the butcher, if so gentle a

term be not more than he deserves, of whom Daniel tells the following story :

"It is a fact well authenticated, that one Gentleman who used to boast that he never killed less than *twenty-five* brace of partridges on *the first of September*, has been known to take the late *hatched* birds, that could scarcely fly above the stubble, from before the noses of his pointers, tie their legs together, hang them up, and so shoot them, that he might not fall short of his favourite number."

This is an awful example of the demoralising effects of the lust for big bags, and it conveys a not unseasonable warning.

In 1813 Daniel published a supplement to his "Rural Sports," dedicated to the Marquis of Blandford, a sumptuous volume for which the compiler obtained 700 subscribers. A sorrier piece of book-making I have seldom seen. It is a mere scrap-book of odds and ends without any coherence. Two items of information, however, I gleaned from it which are not without interest. The one is that Daniel Lambert, the man-mountain, was famous for his breed of setters and pointers ; four couples, sold in 1806, fetched 218 guineas. The other item is the following anecdote of the Duke of Richmond's huntsman. Hounds were out at the end of spring, 1783, and coming to a check, the Duke asked the huntsman the reason. "Why, my lord," was the reply, "it must be owing to them damned stinking violets, I think." *There*, then, we have the original of John Leech's famous picture in *Punch*—a veritable chestnut indeed, served up fresh at seventy years of age !

And here I take my leave of Parson Daniel. His "Rural Sports" has been superseded by other and doubtless better works of a similar kind, but he was the first in the field, and I can assure any sportsman who may chance to light upon a copy of the book that he will do well to open it, for he will find much entertaining matter in its pages.

Colonel Peter Hawker

I TAKE off my hat, metaphorically, to Colonel Peter Hawker as one of the very best sportsmen that ever lived. Neither in my reading nor in my experience have I met with any man who followed sport for its own sake with more genuine enthusiasm. Nothing daunted him in his pursuit of it. He faced cold, hunger, hardship of every kind with really heroic fortitude and cheerfulness. As long as he was able to stand, or even hobble on crutches, he would not let either the pain of old Peninsular wounds or the constant attacks of fever and rheumatism to which he was subject keep him indoors when there was shooting to be had.

His favourite form of the sport was wild-fowl shooting, than which there is no severer test of a man's sportsmanship. For, to succeed in that difficult and arduous but most fascinating pursuit, there is required an amount of endurance, hardihood, and patience, a contempt for discomfort, and a capability of standing exposure and fatigue which you will find in none but the most thorough-going enthusiast. To those, how-



COLONEL PETER HAWKER.

ever, who can and will undergo the hardships it entails, wild-fowl shooting is the finest and most exciting sport the British Isles afford. Colonel Hawker is universally admitted to be the "Father of Wild-fowling," and assuredly none ever followed the sport with greater skill or warmer ardour. In these respects he has never been surpassed, and I know only one man whom I would bracket with him as an equal—to wit, Sir Ralph Payne-Gallwey, the greatest practical exponent of wild-fowl shooting now living, and a sportsman of the same heroic type as Hawker.

But Colonel Hawker was more than a sportsman—he was a gallant soldier, a cultured gentleman, and a most accomplished musician. It is odd to find the author of "Instructions to Young Sportsmen"—the most popular and valuable handbook of sport ever written—also figuring as the author of "Instructions for the Best Position on the Piano-forte," and the patentee of very ingenious hand-moulds for that instrument. It is true that while the sporting "Instructions" have run into eleven editions, the musical "Instructions" have never got beyond the first modest edition. But the Colonel was just as enthusiastic about the piano as about the gun, and could finger the keys of the one as skilfully as the trigger of the other.

Peter Hawker was the son of Colonel Peter Ryves Hawker, of Longparish, Hants, by Mary Wilson Yonge, a lady of Irish family. Born on December 24th, 1786, he entered the army as a cornet in the 1st Dragoons in 1801, being then only fifteen years of age. His Diaries of sport, which he kept

regularly for fifty years, commence with 1802, when he was sixteen. How precocious a sportsman he was may be gathered from the fact that his bag for the month of September in that year amounted to three hundred head, and he killed his first thirteen jack-snipe without a miss! He was, indeed, ever a deadly shot at snipe. In one of his best seasons he killed forty in succession without a miss, and it was by no means an uncommon thing with him to kill eleven out of twelve. Sixty shots in succession at various game without missing he chronicles in one entry in his "Diaries," and seventy-seven partridges out of seventy-eight in another. He must have been incomparably the best game-shot of his time, and I should doubt whether he has ever been surpassed. That he was a lively and frolicsome young sportsman, too, is proved by many entries in his "Diaries." Here is one as a specimen, under date October 3rd, 1808, when his regiment was quartered at Ipswich:

"3rd.—Went from Ipswich, with a party amounting to near twenty, besides markers and beaters, to storm a preserved cover belonging to a Parson Bond, because he never allowed anybody a day's shooting, and had man-traps and dog-guns all over his wood. I had made out a regular plan of attack and line of march, but our precision was frustrated by the first man we saw on reaching the ground, who was the keeper; we therefore had no time to hold a council of war, but rushed into cover like a pack of foxhounds, before his face. Away he went, naming every one he could, and we all joined him in the hue and cry of 'Where is Parson Bond?'

In the meantime our *feu de joie* was going on most rapidly. At last up came the parson, almost choked with rage. The two first persons he warned off were Pearson and myself; having been served with notices we kept him in tow, while the others rallied his covers, and serenaded him with an incessant bombardment in every direction. The confused rector did not know which way to run. The scene of confusion was ridiculous beyond anything, and the invasion of an army could scarcely exceed the noise. Not a word could be heard for the cries of 'Mark!' 'Dead!' and 'Well done!' interspersed every moment with bang—bang, and the yelping of barrack curs. The parson at last mustered his whole establishment to act as patriots against the marauders, footboys running one way, ploughmen mounted on cart-horses galloping the other, and every one from the village that could be mustered was collected to repel the mighty shock. At last we retreated, and about half-past four those who had escaped being entered in his doomsday book renewed the attack. The parson having eased himself by a vomit, began to speak more coherently, and addressed himself to those who, being liable to an action of trespass, were obliged to stand in the footpath, and take the birds as they flew over; at last so many were caught that the battle ceased. Though a large number of pheasants were destroyed, the chase did not end in such aggregate slaughter as we expected, and not more than one-third of those brought down were bagged, in consequence of our being afraid to turn off our best dogs; we brought away some of the parson's traps, one of which was a

most terrific engine, and now hangs in the mess-room for public exhibition. Only one dog was caught the whole day, and whose should that be but Parson Bond's!"

In 1803 Cornet Hawker exchanged into the 14th Light Dragoons, and got his troop in the following year, for which step he paid £3,990; but he subsequently notes as an instance of the iniquity of the old purchase system that when he was, to use his own words, "driven out of the service by the Colonel and Lieutenant-Colonel for no other reason than what ought to have been a recommendation—namely, the very severe wounds with which I had till lately been disabled from doing my duty," he only received £1,785 for his troop. His steps altogether from Cornet to Captain cost him £5,805, and he lost £2,622 by the bargain.

In 1809 Hawker's regiment was ordered to join the expeditionary force which sailed under the command of Sir Arthur Wellesley for Portugal. The horrors of transit in a filthy old collier, with a drunken master, Colonel Hawker has graphically depicted in his "Journal of a Regimental Officer during the recent Campaign in Portugal and Spain," which was published anonymously. There are some soldiers, I believe, who grumble at the transport accommodation of to-day. I would recommend such grumblers to get Colonel Hawker's book, and read his narrative of the sickening and hideous tortures to which not only the wounded and invalided but the hale and sound had to submit in his day on board the floating hells which they called transports.

Young Hawker first smelt powder in a skirmish on May 10th, when the 14th Light Dragoons charged the French cavalry and inflicted some loss. On May 12th his regiment was engaged in the memorable Passage of the Douro, and on crossing the river was ordered to advance and support the infantry. A squadron of the 14th formed up in threes, and passing along the whole British line, which cheered them lustily, rode straight for the enemy. The first troop, which numbered but two-and-fifty men, bore the brunt of the charge, and lost ten killed and twenty wounded, whilst three out of five officers were put *hors de combat*. Hawker had his horse shot under him the moment after a ball had grazed his upper lip ; but he fought his way on foot out of the *mêlée*, and regained the British lines unhurt. The little band of survivors drove before them nearly three hundred prisoners, and altogether the affair was a most brilliant one. The 14th were publicly complimented by the Commander-in-Chief on their gallantry ; but the highest tribute to their prowess was that paid by the general in command of the French, who said that they must have been drunk or mad, as the brigade they attacked was nearly two thousand strong.

This feat of arms entitled the 14th to have the word "Douro" inscribed on the regimental colours, and thirty years afterwards Colonel Hawker was agreeably reminded of the part which he had played in that dashing affair. His old regiment gave a picnic at Hampton Court, to which he was invited. The reception awarded him was such as to bring the tears to his eyes. None of

the officers, indeed, had been among his contemporaries, but there were veteran troopers who had served under him. "Brown the bandmaster," writes the Colonel in his Diary, "Healby the trumpet-major (a piccolo boy in the band in my time), and Fitzhenry, an old mungo and pupil of mine on the tambourin, soon proclaimed me as the officer whose squadron won the trophy of the Douro (which they were wearing), and the respect shown to me by 'all hands' was such as I could not but feel." A still further honour was paid him when the Colonel of the regiment proposed his health in a stirring speech, recapitulating the gallant deeds of their distinguished guest.

At the fierce battle of Talavera, fought on July 27th and 28th, 1809, Hawker was very badly wounded, and was left for hours in agony in the street where he had fallen. When he was at last picked up he did not fare much better. "The hip-bone," he writes, "which a rifle-ball had gone through and shattered, and the muscles of my back, where it was then lodged, were bumped with the greatest violence against the hard sides of the carriage." The consequence was that inflammation set in and he narrowly escaped death. He was invalided home, but as soon as he thought himself well enough for service he set out to rejoin his regiment. Three times he sailed, and three times, either from stress of weather or other mishap, the ship which carried him put back to England. Thus, after travelling a thousand miles, and spending upwards of £200 in outfit and passage money, he was after all baulked of taking any further part in the perils and glories of the campaign.

In 1813 Captain Hawker retired from active service

under the circumstances to which I have already referred. But in 1815, at the recommendation of the Duke of Clarence, he was promoted to the rank of Major, and in 1821 was appointed Lieutenant-Colonel of the North Hants Militia.

So much for his soldiering ; now let me get back to his career as a sportsman. Even in the midst of war he did not lose sight of sport, and both in Spain and Portugal he pursued his shooting with indefatigable zeal, though with little success. Portugal he found almost destitute of game ; but in Spain there were wood-pigeons, red-legged partridges, and "curious foreign birds" in plenty, which afforded some pastime.

In his Diary for 1809-10 I find this entry : "Only returned from Spain September 28th, and had very little shooting this season owing to severe wound received at Talavera last July 28th." What shooting he did was done from a phaeton, for every movement of his leg caused him great pain. Yet so indefatigable was his zeal for sport that he hobbled out on crutches on February 27th to have a try for trout, and, though compelled to support himself with a stick whilst he threw a fly, brought five brace to hand.

Hawker was indeed one of those "hard Englishmen" whom Kingsley says our "hard, grey weather" breeds, and even serious illness could not keep him from following the sport he loved. Here is an instance, taken at random from his Diary for September, 1822 :

"18th.—The difficulty of killing birds put me on my metal, and my friends, defying me to get even 3 or 4 brace, made me desperate. I therefore quacked

myself up with tincture of bark, sal volatile, and spirits of lavender, to give me artificial strength for a grand field day, and, aided by markers of cavalry and infantry, I attacked the birds in right earnest (and when I do this I never yet failed), and in spite of an execrably bad scent, and a gale of wind from the east, I bagged 15 partridges (and another shot dead and lost) and 1 hare, without missing a shot. Though I shook like an old man of seventy I never shot more brilliantly. I, of course, suffered no other gun to interfere with me, and therefore went alone, so that I could follow up the game at speed when the markers gave the signal, and do as I please, whereas, if I have friends, I always lose two-thirds of my shooting by wishing to accommodate them with the cream of the sport.

21st.—Being sadly in want of game, and seeing every-one beat by the birds, I quacked myself up again with sal volatile, bark and lavender, and, aided by the same good markers, I bagged 12 partridges, 2 snipes, and 1 jack snipe, without missing a shot.

26th.—Was prevented going out or doing anything till this day through illness in the house, and also being unwell myself. I went out merely to try for a brace of birds for the doctor, who had been a repeated attendant, and in an hour and three quarters brought home 6 partridges, 3 snipes, and 2 jack snipes.

Game, etc., killed up to the end of September, 1822 : 108 partridges, 3 hares, 1 rabbit, 11 snipes, 2 wild ducks, 2 teal. Total, 127 head."

On another occasion he thus accounts for what *he* considered bad shooting : " Was nearly tortured to death

by a relay of three dentists who failed in drawing a tremendous tooth and finished with breaking my jaw-bone and complimenting me for the *sang-froid* with which I braved their infernal operations." Instances of his hardihood I might quote by the score, from the record of his experiences in wild-fowl shooting. On one occasion he was out for eighteen hours in his punt in weather so severe that his cap was frozen to his head and his hands were so frost-bitten that he could hardly load, yet he thought himself amply compensated for his discomforts by bagging 53 wigeon, 2 mallards, and a coot. He frequently buried himself in an old sugar-cask in the mud on the great sea-lagoons, and waited there for hours for the flight of the ducks.

Here is a specimen of the sport he met with among the wild fowl at Lymington :

"28th.—My swan that I shot yesterday, having died and been picked up, there remained 7 of these magnificent birds, and they were seen off Keyhaven sitting among what little ice was left, about nine o'clock in the morning, and every corner of the creeks or on shore contained a gunner anxiously hoping that they might possibly swim or fly near enough for a random shot. Having to contend with all this impediment, and the wildest birds in existence to cope with, I had recourse to a manœuvre which struck me as the only chance. I dressed myself and Reade in a clean white shirt, white neck-cloth, and clean white night-cap, and in my white punt went all the way round to windward through a pretty heavy sea ; and after getting to where the hill called 'Mount' became a background to the

view, in which we appeared, we, dressed thus in milk-white with a very white punt, drifted among the floating pieces of white ice till we got within about 180 yards of these monstrous fowls, when I let drive at their necks, and knocked down and brought home 2 wild swans or hoopers. I had to finish one of them with an old musket, or he might probably have escaped ; and I wounded a third severely, as three were fairly laid in the water to the discharge of my swivel gun. As this attack was in full view of the village, I had several people anxiously looking on, and among them my children and all the house with their hearts in their mouths, and in a gale of wind and rain eagerly watching our proceedings.

Towards the afternoon I was not a little surprised to see 16 more swans. They were, however, very far off, and near to a dangerous sea, and therefore, of course determined to run no risk, I dare only to venture to within 220 yards of them ; I consequently fired at this distance, and fairly laid 5 of them down on the water, till the others had flown above a gunshot ; and notwithstanding this they all recovered, and, I suppose, joined the company. The 2 that I killed were of equal weight (18 lbs. each), one milk-white, the other of a dusky colour ; the latter the largest ; got also this day 10 geese and 5 wigeon. The birds here being so incessantly popped at, I am obliged to use large mould shot (called 'S.S.G.') by day. Of this my gun carries 1 lb., with an equal measure of treble strong, coarse-grained powder, made on purpose, as a common gun or common shot afloat here would rarely

if ever hit a bird so as to kill him. As usual gunners afloat all day out of number ; and, I dare to say, not a little jealous of our invariable success."

The vicissitudes of wild-fowling, its irritating and gratifying incidents, may be gathered from the following entries :

"24th.—A very hard frost, but the wind more moderate. The birds were frozen out of harbour, and not even in at night. I went outside for the day, but found them wild and much scattered, as the moderate weather had drawn forth the gentleman gunners, who generally perform the part of excellent 'gallibaggers,' a term used by the clods for anything to frighten away birds. All, therefore, I could do to-day was to bring home 18 wigeon, 2 brent geese, 2 curlews. My best shot was 14 wigeon bagged. Thus ended the best week's wild-fowl shooting I had ever enjoyed, or ever heard of. It is worthy of being summed up together, being as follows :

Monday.—22 wigeon	22
Tuesday.—24 wigeon, 1 curre, 1 pintail	26
Wednesday (night included).—101 wigeon, 4 ducks, 6 plover, 1 coot	112
Thursday.—5 wigeon, 1 curre, 5 ducks, 1 goose, 3 hoopers, 3 curlews	18
Friday.—28 wigeon, 1 duck, 1 curlew	30
Saturday.—18 wigeon, 2 geese, 2 curlews, 1 plover	23
Making in all 198 wigeon, 2 curre, 10 ducks, 1 pintail, 3 geese, 3 hoopers, 6 curlews, 7 plover, 1 coot ; which is, 217 wild-fowl and 14 waders.	
Grand Total	231 head."

Colonel Hawker on one occasion killed in the Solent 100 brent geese with one discharge of his big double-

barrelled swivel-gun. This is, I believe, a record for geese, but 127 wigeon have been bagged at one shot; and Sir Ralph Payne-Gallwey has frequently killed 50 or 60, and sometimes as many as 60 or 70 wigeon at a single discharge. The last-named great sportsman holds the record for a season's wild-fowl shooting—*viz.*, 1,500 geese and duck. This feat was accomplished in the hard winter of 1880-81. It has never been even approached, and I suppose never will be, now that wild-fowl shooting is becoming every year harder to obtain.

Occasionally the Colonel indulged in some fancy shooting. For example, he has this entry in his Diary: "Made a droll trial of a new-stocked gun. I knocked down in seven shots 6 bats and a moth." And again: "Mr. Cadmore, never having seen a bird killed flying, I took him out to see me fire 10 shots at swifts and swallows, 2 at moorhens, 2 at sparrows, and one at a halfpenny thrown up. I killed every bird and handsomely marked the halfpenny."

But the most stupendous destruction he ever wrought with a single shot was the following in September, 1825:

"26th.—Tried some experiments on the lake (accompanied by Reade, who came to me on purpose) for the amusement of the officers and a large concourse of spectators assembled from all parts, and astonished my lookers-on by some excellent shots at coots, the only fowl upon the pond. Previously to this, by the bye, I turned out at five in the morning—after being up till near three—in order to storm an enormous

army of starlings, into which I blew off the great double gun, with 30 ounces of small shot, just before sunrise. What I killed it is impossible to say, but from the appearance of the huge hole blown through the phalanx of birds, my spectators guessed at least 500, though I could get but a mere share of those which fell, as nearly all of them dropped in the reeds or on quagmires. What I bagged at the time, however, was 243 starlings at one shot. The feathers which the wind blew over and towards us after the shot, I could compare to nothing but a heavy fall of black snow.

P.S. *Dec. 27th.*—My man Charles came home from Alresford and brought back word that the reeds were cut, and the workmen found between 200 and 300 more starlings. If so, I was right in guessing that I killed 500 at a shot."

One more curious incident in Colonel Hawker's wild-fowling experiences let me quote before I leave them. Under date February 17th, 1826, I find the following in his Diary :—

"Reade ran out in the rain and 'lowered a parson' [shot a cormorant]. This bird made some fun for us. He had thirty shot through his skin; three flat fish and an eel were taken out of him, and three shot through the flat fish, also through undigested stuff like meat. So that Reade had shot fish flesh and fowl flying; and in spite of this the nine-lived glutton led us a chase for twenty minutes before he got sick enough to be caught, although shot at, within 40 yards, by a shoulder duck gun. He was disposed of as follows: the skin to make a dandy collar for a coat; the feathers

to make me drawing pens ; and his carcase begged by my boatman Williams, who engaged two friends to partake of him for a delicate Sunday dinner."

And now let me glance at some of the Colonel's performances among the "birds." On September 4th, 1826, he writes :

"4th.—My first day. The weather mended considerably ; but the country was so extremely barren as scarcely to afford a vestige of covert for the birds. The stubbles were all trod down by sheep and 'leasers,' and, owing to the previous dry weather there were no turnips large enough to shelter the game. The birds were plentiful, but much wilder than ever I knew them in September ; insomuch that scarcely one covey in ten would allow even the dogs to come within gunshot. I, however, by means of mustering a good army of markers and harassing the birds by repeated charges of cavalry, so completely tired them down at last, that I performed this day the most that ever was done by me, or anyone in the annals of Longparish sporting. I bagged 56 partridges and (for our country, in one day, a miracle) 7 hares in nine hours ; never lost a bird the whole day. Owing to the extreme wildness of the birds, I was, of course, obliged to fire many random shots ; but notwithstanding I was so weak from having been unwell, I did not lose a bird by bad shooting the whole day, as the only two fair shots I missed were at single birds, both of which I secured with my second barrel. Taking everything into consideration, this is the greatest day I ever had in my life." He adds : "I believe I beat all England. This

was posted as a miracle in all the papers because the birds were never known to be so wild : considering all things I shot famously."

But this was eclipsed by the sport he had in the following September. His bag on the first day was 102 birds and 1 hare, besides three brace shot and lost ; on the second day 50 birds and 2 hares ; on the third day 56 birds and 3 hares.

"Having now," he writes, "done what I believe never was done here before, and what may possibly never be done here again, and supplied all the farmers and my friends with game, I shall here terminate the war against the partridges, and at all events leave them to others till I want game again and can have proper scenting weather to kill a few birds in a quiet way." There speaks the true sportsman, a very different creature from the mere game-slaughterer.

"In our opinion," says Sir Ralph Payne-Gallwey, the greatest living authority on shooting, "it is a sure mark of a true sportsman to be contented with a small and hardly earned bag of wild birds." He is referring there more particularly to wild-fowl shooting on shore, but the remark applies generally, and no man ever stood this test of a true sportsman more triumphantly than Colonel Hawker. There is one bone, however, I have to pick with him, and that is in respect of his want of sympathy with the shore-shooter. Like all punt-shooters, he regarded the shore-shooter as a nuisance. Now, I have been a shore-shooter, and I maintain that the stalking of wild-fowl from the shore requires every whit as much craft and sportsmanship as punt-shooting

demands. I am not underrating the skill and patience and cunning displayed by the punt-shooter—I admire and appreciate those qualities, and admit that the successful punt-shooter possesses them in a remarkable degree; but I ask any man who has ever stalked, say, curlews, whether the craft and wariness and patience required are not as great as the punt-shooter exhibits. To my thinking, the man who can fairly stalk and bag half a dozen curlews in a day has performed a greater feat of sportsmanship than the man who has killed fifty widgeon from a punt or a hundred driven grouse from behind a butt.

Colonel Hawker's grand total of game shot in fifty-one seasons was as follows:

7,035	partridges.
575	pheasants.
4,488	wild fowl, swans, ducks, and geese.
1,821	riverside and seashore birds.
68	woodcocks.
2,116	snipe.
351	plover, grey, green, and golden.
181	various.
<hr/>	
17,753	

But he tells us that many hundreds of shore birds and wild-fowl were unrecorded.

It must be remembered that Colonel Hawker was limited in the extent of ground he had to shoot over, and, suffering constantly from ill-health, was severely handicapped. It was his boast that he never knew an absolutely blank day; but in some seasons birds were so wild and scarce that a single shot was all he obtained in a day. And as for wild-fowl, there were

seasons when they were conspicuous by their absence. For example, of the season 1842-43 he writes in his Diary: "No shooting for anyone on the coast this season." And of 1838-39: "The worst season in the memory of man, both on the coast for wild fowl and inland for game. I never even launched a punt (it was not worth while) this winter, and did not fire a shot after November 26th."

Of 1851-52 he writes: "Illness nearly the whole season prevented my shooting, and at one time my life was in danger."

Taking these drawbacks into consideration, the Colonel's record of sport, indefatigably pursued for fifty years, is a fine one. I note, by the way, that he attributes the falling off in the wild-fowl shooting about Keyham and Lymington largely to the establishment of Mr. Alexander Baring's bird sanctuary at Grange Park, where he "feeds and monopolises, merely to ornament his water and tickle his fancy, half the fowl in Hampshire. I drove there expressly to see his collection, and I am confident I saw not less than 8,000 fowl in the water before his house." But there are two sides to every question, and perhaps Mr. Baring was actuated by worthier motives than the irate sportsman assigns to him.

In reading Colonel Hawker's Journals, in which, as I have shown, he sets down the plain, unvarnished tale of an enthusiastic sportsman's daily life for fifty years, I have been struck by the constant reference he makes to the sport enjoyed while travelling by coach. Delightful old leisurely days those were when a man could beguile

the tedium of a long journey by shooting on the way ! Take the following entry, for example, descriptive of a journey by mail-coach to Exeter in 1811 : " We were a delightfully jolly party, and it not being post-day, the mail stopped whenever we saw game, and during the journey I killed four brace of partridges. When it was too dark to shoot our party mounted the roof and sang choruses (which I joined in and drove) and in which the guard and coachman took a very able part." Happy old days indeed when a sportsman could hop off the coach and bag a brace whenever he saw a covey, without troubling his head as to whether he were trespassing or not ! Though possibly landowners and game-preservers might not altogether have relished the random visits of these peripatetic gunners.

As illustrative of the non-sporting phases of the Colonel's character, let me quote these two entries oddly sandwiched between two fishing items.

" *March 18th.*—London. I was till now, an invalid, but being this day a little better, I went (wrapped up) in the evening to Covent Garden Theatre in order to hear my favourite overture of 'Der Freischütz' conducted by the immortal composer himself, Carl Maria von Weber. Nothing could be more sublimely beautiful, and the applause that was drawn forth by the appearance of this great composer was no less flattering than just.

19th.—Sunday. The best sermon (for explanation of the Scripture, analogy, metaphor, language, logic, and energetic delivery) that I have ever yet heard, was this day preached at St. Mary's, Bryanstone Square, by the

rector, the Rev. Mr. Dibdin, on the subject of St. Paul's shipwreck."

The Mr. Dibdin here referred to was the Rev. Thomas Frognall Dibdin, a noted bibliographer, author of "Bibliomania," one of the founders of the Roxburghe Club, and a nephew of the famous song-writer.

Besides being a musical amateur of the first class, Colonel Hawker was also an amateur actor of exceptional ability. He used to enliven his tedious journeys by coach by assuming different characters for the deception of each batch of fresh passengers on the short stages, to the mingled bewilderment and amusement of the coachman and guard.

At the Great Exhibition of 1851 the Colonel exhibited some very ingenious improvements in firearms of his own invention which attracted considerable attention both among sportsmen and military men. He hoped that the War Office would have adopted some of them ; but when did any inventor ever succeed in convincing Red Tape ? His hopes, of course, were disappointed.

Colonel Hawker's last shooting season was that of 1852-53. "Not a shot at wild fowl this season," he writes ; "but I beat all the neighbours at partridge-shooting in September, killing 164 birds."

The final entries are the following in 1853 :

"*June 29th.*—Sunday. Being too weak to walk, I went in a donkey chaise to morning church at Milford (where, as well as at Longparish, Mrs. Hawker had me prayed for when not expected to recover), to return thanks to God for my escape from death in my long and dangerous illness, through which I had not been in

church since the early part of last January, and never expected to be in church again, except on my way to the grave.

July.—Longparish. From the 1st I have been so dreadfully ill that I could do nothing. My nights have been as awful as before.

7th.—The thunder and lightning all night caused such oppressive heat that no one could rest in bed. My sufferings could scarcely be conceived.

8th to 14th.—Too ill to get about save by quiet easy drives in the carriage, and to crawl out to look at all the grand repairs outside the house, which are now done. Attended by Dr. Hempsted twice a day, as my sufferings are alarming. We have had incessant wet weather ever since I returned to Longparish, and consequently the heavy water-meadow fogs oppressed me even more than those of London, from which I had retreated on the score of health. To-day, the 14th, Dr. Hempsted went from me to his other patient, the Earl of Portsmouth, for whom he had no hope, and who died this day at one o'clock. Peace to his soul !”

Twenty-four days later the Colonel's summons came, and the sufferings so bravely endured were at an end. He died on August 7th, in the sixty-seventh year of his age. Colonel Hawker was twice married : first in 1811 at Lisbon to Julia, daughter of Mr. Hooker Bartellot, by whom he had a son Peter William Lanoe, who, like his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, entered the army and rose to the rank of colonel. He also had some of his father's sporting tastes, and edited the tenth and eleventh editions of the “Instructions to Young Sports-

men." Colonel Hawker's second marriage took place in 1844 to Helen Susan, widow of Captain John Symonds, R.N., and daughter of Major Chatterton. The great sportsman's grandson Captain Peter Hawker, R.N., is now in possession of Longparish House, and his granddaughter Miss M. E. Hawker, who writes under the pseudonym of "L. Falconer," is the authoress of "Mademoiselle Ixe," a novel of considerable merit.

In personal appearance Colonel Hawker was strikingly handsome. He stood six feet, and to the end of his days was as straight as a lance, with the unmistakable carriage of a soldier. In his manners he was a gentleman to the finger-tips. What he was as a practical sportsman the reader will have gathered from the foregoing pages, though I must not omit to add that he was an accomplished fly-fisher, as the trout of the Test had reason to know, for, at the lowest computation, he must have killed some twenty thousand of them. His "Instructions to Young Sportsmen" is still the best book on wild-fowl shooting in our language. "It is a book," says Sir Ralph Payne-Gallwey, the greatest living authority on the subject, "which for terseness, accuracy, and original information is without an equal. . . . With a few slight alterations, such as the substitution of breech-loaders for muzzle-loaders, it is in many respects as useful for reference to this generation as it was to the last, and especially so with regard to the habits and shooting of wild-fowl."

"Approbation from Sir Hubert Stanley is praise indeed." And any eulogy of mine after such a tribute from such a sportsman would be not only superfluous but impertinent.

John Holt, of Tottenham

I MADE the acquaintance of John Holt under curious circumstances. I had reached that momentous epoch in a young sportsman's life when he is permitted to have a brand-new gun made for his own special use. Hitherto I had shot with an old single gun, the stub-twist barrel of which was worn so thin that in ramming down the wad I often cut my finger. But it was a rare good gun for shooting, and I remember with pride to this day how I killed my first woodcock with it—a long and difficult shot—and thereby “wiped the eyes” of two veteran sportsmen who had missed clean. Conceive the ecstasy of a boy of fifteen at accomplishing such a feat!

In choosing a new gun I had been advised to consult a well-known old sportsman living at Stone, in Staffordshire, where I was then staying on a visit. This veteran votary of sport was a miller, renowned round all that country-side for his prowess with gun and rifle. When I went to call on him, I found him sitting on a bench in his back garden with a pea-rifle on one side of him and a double-barrelled gun on the



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other. He was a tall, robust, rubicund man, about sixty-five years of age I should judge, and wore spectacles. On my introducing myself to him, he said :

“And so you’re the young gentleman that wants to buy a new gun, eh ! Well, can you shoot ?”

I modestly said that I thought I could, a little. He handed me the pea-rifle, and pointing to a tree in the far corner of the garden, with a high railway embankment rising behind it, he said :

“Now, d’ye see that oyster shell stuck in the fork of the branch ? ’Tis just a hundred paces from where you stand. I’ve measured it. Let’s see if you can hit it.”

I fired and missed.

“Ha !” said he, “now let me see what I can do.” With that he reloaded the rifle, fired, and the oyster shell fell shattered.

“Now let’s see what you can do with a gun,” said this terrible old man.

He handed me the double barrel, picked up a pebble about the size of a golf-ball, and flung it into the air. I fired and missed.

“Ha !” said he, with precisely the same formula, “now let me see what I can do.”

I picked up a pebble, flung it into the air, and the old man struck it so fair and square that it was split into fragments. The gun was eighteen-gauge, and shot very close and hard.

I felt rather small after my own humiliating failure ; but the miller’s wife, a fine, big, comely, buxom woman, came up to me, and clapping her hand on my shoulder, said cheerily :

"Don't you be down-hearted, young gentleman. My sons are took just the same way when their father's lookin' on, but they can shoot straight enough when he's away. And I do say that it's enough to frighten any young gentleman to see an old man like him shootin' in that fashion when he ought to be thinkin' of the other world as he's a-goin' to, where there ain't no such nonsense as shootin'."

The stalwart miller only laughed and said :

"Well, I dunno about that, missis; but I daresay this young gentleman will shoot well enough one of these days; and now I reckon he'll come indoors and have a bit of refreshment and a talk about getting this new gun."

When I went into the parlour, the first thing I saw was the portrait of John Holt which accompanies this article, hanging up framed, in a conspicuous place on the wall. I stepped up and looked at it.

"Ah!" said my host, seeing me thus engaged, "that's the likeness of the best sportsman I ever knew—John Holt, of Tottenham, one of the good old sort that's pretty nigh died out. He was my wife's uncle, and many a day's sport he and I have had together."

My sporting Mentor then gave me some examples of his friend Holt's prowess with the gun.

"I reckon myself a good shot," he added, "but I don't think I was ever quite the equal of John Holt with the gun, though I won't say as I was so very far behind him. I pride myself now on killing all my birds *dead*. I can't a-bear to wing 'em, and that's why I use such a small bore. And that I learnt from

John Holt. But with a rifle I could beat *him*—ay! and every other man I've ever come across. I've hit five penny pieces running at fifty yards for a match of £50 a side, and I've never found my master at that game."

From what I had already seen of the miller's skill I could readily believe this. He was without doubt a remarkable shot.

It must have been quite twenty years later that I came across John Holt for the second time. I was looking over the contents of an old bookstall in Holborn, and on picking up a stray volume of the *Sporting Magazine* for 1835, I lighted upon the portrait of John Holt, with the accompanying biographical sketch, which I give intact as an interesting record of a genuine sportsman of the good old school, whose memory is worthy of preservation.

"The subject of this plate, John Holt, Esq., of Tottenham, who departed this life on the 26th of December, 1831, having nearly completed his 85th year, was an excellent shot of the Old School; and so true a lover of fair play, that he scorned to take the field with a double gun; and as to *battues*, he held them in utter abhorrence; he considered the former unfair; but the latter he deemed a crime little less than sacrilege. He was not fond of new-fangled innovations, and repudiated *detonators*—'flint and steel, and straight powder (he was wont to say), were all that a fair sportsman required.'

Woodcocks were his favourite quarry—indeed he preferred it to any other kind of shooting—and in

bringing them to bag was deemed *nulli secundus*. From an account which he kept for a number of years, it appears that upwards of six hundred couple fell to his single barrel. The coverts which afforded him this his favourite sport were, Enfield Chase (before it was enclosed); Hollick and Betstyle Woods, near Colney Hatch; Lords' Grove, Southgate; the Larks and the Hawk Hills, Essex.

Mr. Holt shot wild fowl and snipe equally well, which at times he met with in great numbers in Tottenham and Edmonton Marshes. The most inclement weather did not deter him from going out in pursuit of them; and though not a fast walker, no day was ever too long for him. In all his shooting excursions he was attended by Joseph Ratford up to the close of a lengthened and faithful servitude of forty-three years, when in April, 1817, Death laid this attached follower low, deservedly lamented by Mr. Holt and his family. This speaks volumes for both master and man.

In his early days Mr. Holt shot with a gun made by Lett, and afterwards with one by Nock, the barrels of each three feet three inches; but for the last twenty years of his shooting with one by E. Baker, of White-chapel Road, the barrel two feet ten inches, a gun he highly prized, and with which he killed very many long shots."

The writer then proceeds to give a pretty long list of John Holt's feats with the gun, which I shall not quote because many of the exploits considered phenomenal then would seem of little account to the modern sportsman. To kill eleven pigeons out of twelve, as Holt

did on more than one occasion at the Old Hats Club at Ealing, will not strike the pigeon-slayer of to-day as an extraordinary performance, though it was considered at the time a notable feat for a man shooting with a single-barrel flint-lock.

But even the best game-shot of to-day will admit that to kill four brace and a half of cock-pheasants, seven brace of partridges, and a leash of hares—twenty-six head of game—in twenty-seven shots (no double shots, remember) was a great performance. And this John Holt did in a day's shooting near Cromer.

Another good day of Holt's was at Wheathampstead, in Hertfordshire, when in twenty-nine shots at partridges he bagged thirteen and a half brace. And scarcely less successful was his day's shoot at Hadham, when in twenty-five shots he killed eleven and a half brace of birds. And as for woodcocks, it was seldom indeed that one escaped him. In one season he killed twenty-two in succession without a miss, and in another twenty-three out of twenty-five.

"From these brief memoranda," says the *Sporting Magazine* in conclusion, "it will be seen that no shot came *amiss* to Mr. Holt, whether on wing or on foot.

In vain the startled hare from covert hies—
In vain the whirring covey mount the skies—
The watchful gunner, with unerring sight,
Points his dread tube, and death o'ertakes their flight.

A fairer sportsman than Mr. Holt both as regards game, and consideration for the farmers' crops and fences never drew trigger; and if by any chance any

one suffered from his enthusiasm in pursuit of sport, he was always ready to make due reparation.

He was English, sir, from top to toe."

I have given John Holt a place in these pages because I regard him as a typical sportsman of the old school. And when one bears in mind that he invariably shot with a single barrel, his "bags" were phenomenal for those days. As a game-shot, he could have had few, if any, superiors among his contemporaries. It was well that he died before the new style of shooting came in, for he was one of those to whom "driving" would have been an abomination, and a *battue* synonymous with butchery. I confess that my sympathies are with the old race of sportsmen, of which John Holt was so excellent a representative. But, though I began my career as a sportsman under the conditions and traditions of the old school, I do not join in indiscriminate abuse of the new school. My earliest and pleasantest recollections of shooting are associated with muzzle-loaders and well-broken pointers and setters, when the finding of your game was held to afford quite as much sport as the killing of it. And I still maintain that the test of a true sportsman is his capacity for appreciating and enjoying the science of woodcraft—the study of the habits and habitats of the game of which he goes in quest. The modern "drive" has developed a race of splendid shots, but sportsmanship has been sacrificed to marksmanship.

I will admit that the close farming of the present day has rendered shooting over dogs after the old style

almost impossible. I grant, too, that the skill required in shooting driven game is far greater than was demanded of the old-time sportsman—for a rocketing pheasant or a grouse, coming down the wind at the rate of sixty miles an hour, is a hundred times harder to hit than birds flushed within twenty or thirty yards of the shooter over a steady brace of pointers or setters. But where does the *sport* come in at these big shoots? The craze for enormous bags is a thing I cannot reconcile with the spirit of true sportsmanship. To me it seems a piece of vulgar brag—a show got up to advertise the prowess of individual shooters and the head of game bred by big preservers. The lust for slaughter and the pride in mere straight shooting seem to me significant marks of a degeneracy in the ideals of sport. But there is a “remnant” left who have not bowed the knee to this modern Baal. You will find good and true sportsmen among the new school; you may note their sober presence and workmanlike air among the “smart” and dandy marksmen at big shoots. But it is hardly there that I should advise the sporting Diogenes to go in search of them. He would need his lantern there; he might dispense with it, I think, if he went among the class to which John Holt belonged, and to those remote and quiet paradises of England where the old homely ideas of sport still linger.

“ Christopher North ”

(Professor John Wilson)

THERE still lingers a glamour round the name of Christopher North, though to the present generation he is little more than a name—“ the Shade of that which once was great.” Fainter and more shadowy that Shade will grow as, “ glimmering through the dreams of things that were,” it flits across the path of the future student of English literature, but it will never quite vanish. Scotsmen will take care that the fame of the author of the “ Noctes ” does not wholly die, for they are a loyal and clannish race, not prone to forget their national worthies, and there will always be *some* true sportsmen left, I hope, both Scotch and English, who will read with relish the breezy rhapsodies of the “ Recreations.”

Perhaps John Wilson’s contemporaries who were under the spell of his commanding and extraordinary individuality did more than justice to his fine intellect. But if so, posterity, I think, is likely to go to the other extreme and do him less than justice. For when a man is gifted, as John Wilson was, with a captivating personality, in which mental and physical endowments had an almost equal share, it is only his contemporaries who



John Wilson



can appreciate his full worth; just as it is only those who have heard the voice of a great orator, seen his eyes flash, watched the changing expressions on his mobile face, who can judge of the true power of his eloquence. The writings of Christopher North to one who never knew him in the flesh must necessarily convey as inadequate an idea of the real force and greatness of the man as the printed speech, bereft of the kindling accessories of voice and eye and gesture, conveys of the fire and spirit of the orator.

Yet there are many, especially among those who set up to be literary critics, who will not allow that John Wilson deserved his contemporary fame, because the written words he has left behind him fail to satisfy the superfine, critical taste of a generation whose literary standards and methods are wholly different from those in vogue when the "*Noctes Ambrosianæ*" took Edinburgh by storm. I do not assert that John Wilson has any claim to a posthumous fame equal to that which he enjoyed in his lifetime. But I do assert that the fame which his contemporaries awarded him was no more than his due. For, in apportioning that fame, they took into consideration his glorious manhood, his splendid enthusiasm, his infectious animal spirits, his hearty, bracing, health-inspiring love of Nature, his vigorous hatred of humbug and cant, his keen sense of the beautiful in literature and art, the eagle-like sweep of his strong intellect, the torrent-like rush of his fervid eloquence, the deep poetic feeling that runs through his lofty and glowing rhapsodies. If not the greatest of our prose-poets, John Wilson stands at

any rate in the very front rank ; and, though I confess to but a lukewarm admiration for the "Noctes," I can never read the "Recreations" without a feeling of exaltation and delight, as if I were treading the heather beside Christopher in his sporting-jacket, with the free breezes of the Highlands tingling in my cheeks.

But it is as a sportsman that I am chiefly concerned with him here, and, indeed, it is in this phase of his character that John Wilson is seen at his best. Never is his pen more eloquent or his imagination more fervent than when he pictures himself casting a fly in the rocky pools or striding, Manton in hand, over the moors. He loved both fishing and shooting, but the gun was always second to the rod in his affections. Angling was a passion with him, I may almost say from the cradle to the grave. When he was but three years old he is said to have strayed away from his nurse and to have been discovered fishing in the burn with a bit of string and a crooked pin. Possibly this may be a myth, but that he showed his angling enthusiasm very early may be gathered from this glowing passage in the "Recreations" :

"The new-breeched urchin stands on the low bridge of the little bit burnie ! and with crooked pin, baited with one unwrithing ring of a dead worm, and attached to a yarn-thread—for he is not yet got into hair, and is years off gut—his rod of the mere willow or hazel wand, there will he stand during all his play-hours, as forgetful of his primer as if the weary art of printing had never been invented, day after day, week after week, month after month, in mute, deep, earnest,

passionate, heart-mind-and-soul engrossing hope of some time or other catching a minnow or a beardie! A tug—a tug! With a face ten times flushed and pale by turns ere you could count ten, he at last has strength in the agitation of his fear and joy, to pull away at the monster—and there he lies in his beauty amongst the gowans and the greensward, for he has whapped him right over his head and far away, a fish a quarter of an ounce in weight, and, at the very least, two inches long! Off he flies, on wings of wind, to his father, mother, and sisters and brothers, and cousins, and all the neighbourhood, holding the fish aloft in both hands, still fearful of its escape, and, like a genuine child of corruption, his eyes brighten at the first blush of cold blood on his small fummy fingers. He carries about with him, upstairs and down-stairs, his prey upon a plate; he will not wash his hands before dinner, for he exults in the silver scales adhering to the thumb-nail that scooped the pin out of baggy’s maw—and at night, ‘cabin’d, cribb’d, confin’d,’ he is overheard murmuring in his sleep—a thief, a robber, and a murderer, in his yet infant dreams!”

But to trace things back for a moment to their source. John Wilson was born at Paisley on May 18th, 1785. His father was a wealthy gauze manufacturer who had raised himself to that eminence from very humble beginnings. His mother claimed descent, it is said, from James Graham, the “Great Marquis” of Montrose, but her son never, either in his writings or in his conversation, made the slightest allusion to this distinguished ancestry. From his mother John Wilson derived his

grand physique, for she was a woman of stately beauty, which was reproduced in a greater or less degree in all her children. The boy was sent for his early education to the old Manse of Mearns, and there, too, his sporting instincts were stimulated.

"There had been," he writes in the "Recreations," "from time immemorial, it was understood, in the Manse, a duck-gun of very great length, and a musket that, according to an old tradition, had been out both in the Fifteen and Forty-five. There were ten boys of us, and we succeeded by rotation to gun or musket, each boy retaining possession for a single day only ; but then the shooting season continued all the year. They must have been of admirable materials and workmanship, for neither of them so much as once burst during the Seven Years' War. The musket, who, we have often since thought, must surely rather have been a blunderbuss in disguise, was a perfect devil for kicking when she received her discharge ; so much so indeed, that it was reckoned creditable for the smaller boys not to be knocked down by the recoil. She had a very wide mouth, and was thought by us 'an awful scatterer' ; a qualification which we considered of the very highest merit. She carried anything we chose to put into her—balls, buttons, chucky-stanes, slugs or hail. She had but two faults—she had got addicted, probably in early life, to one habit of burning priming, and to another of hanging fire ; habits of which it was impossible, for us at least, to break her by the most assiduous hammering of many a new flint ; but such was the high place she justly occupied in the affection and admiration of us all,

that faults like these did not in the least detract from her general character. Our delight, when she did absolutely, and positively, and *bonâ fide go off*, was in proportion to the comparative rarity of that occurrence ; and as to hanging fire—why we used to let her take her own time, contriving to keep her at the level as long as our strength sufficed, eyes shut perhaps, teeth clenched, face girning, and head slightly averted over the right shoulder, till Muckle-mou'd Meg, who like most other Scottish females, took things leisurely, went off at last with an explosion like the blowing up of a rock."

From the Manse John Wilson went to Glasgow University. There is a portrait of him by Raeburn at this period of his life in the Scottish National Gallery at Edinburgh, which represents him as a slender youth with something of the dandy in his dress and air. It seems almost incredible that this neatly garbed stripling in the faultless coat and natty top boots could ever have developed into the big, careless, slovenly Christopher—picturesque indeed in his slovenliness, but, as Mrs. Oliphant says, "the very impersonation of irregularity, careless prodigality of strength, and want of system." His contemporaries at Glasgow describe him as a model of method and tidiness. Those virtues he seems to have sloughed at Oxford and come out in his true skin of the real Bohemian hue.

By the death of his father he was left master of an unencumbered fortune of £50,000, and was therefore able to cut a dashing figure as gentleman-commoner of Magdalen. Legends of his athletic prowess are still preserved. As leaper, boxer, and pedestrian he had no

equal among his contemporaries. His great jump of 23 feet across the Cherwell, in the presence of many spectators, remained unbeaten until Mr. C. B. Fry eclipsed it six years ago. At the time he made that famous jump, Wilson tells us he was 21 years of age, 5 feet 11 inches in height, and 11 stone in weight. With the exception of Ireland, the professional, who, with weights in his hand and leaping from a spring-board, is credited with 29 feet, there was no one in the three kingdoms who could approach Wilson as a jumper. And later, in his essay on "Gymnastics," he offered to wager "a hundred sovereigns to five against any man in England doing 23 feet on a dead level with a run or a leap on a slightly inclined plane, perhaps an inch to a yard." It was a safe bet to make then and for sixty years afterwards; but so greatly has athletic skill developed since Wilson's time, especially during the last decade, that it would be scarcely safe now to lay these odds against the accomplishment of 25 feet, for the record already stands at 24 feet 7½ inches.

As a boxer Wilson was one of the best amateurs of his day. No undergraduate of his time could take a diploma in boxing unless Wilson had tried him and awarded him a certificate of merit. On one occasion a professional pugilist of some note obstructed Wilson's passage across a bridge. "Will you fight me?" exclaimed the angry undergraduate. "You'd better not try that game on, mister. I'm Tom So-and-So." "I don't care who you are; come on." Then each put up his fists, and at it they went. The professional was licked, and, as he surlily gave in, said, "You must either be the devil

or Jack Wilson of Magdalen." "The latter, at your service," quoth the victor; and the pair of them adjourned to a neighbouring tavern and quaffed a friendly pot of porter together.

Among his pedestrian feats was a night walk from London to Oxford in nine hours. He had been dining in Grosvenor Square, and on his way home was insulted by an impertinent fellow, whom he thrashed; not caring to be arrested for a street row, he started off just as he was, in his dinner dress, for Oxford.

There is, however, a certain vagueness about the details of this and all the other walking feats of John Wilson, and I cannot accept the times given for covering the alleged distances as correct. In later days he once walked seventy miles to be present at a Burns Anniversary Festival, and in referring to that fact his daughter and biographer Mrs. Gordon says:

"Of the Professor's walking feats I have not been able to gather many authentic anecdotes. Mr. Aird mentioned the fact quoted here in his speech at the Burns Festival, and my brother writes me on the subject: 'I have often heard him mention the following. He once walked forty miles in eight hours; but when or where he did it I cannot recollect. On another occasion he walked from Liverpool to Elleray within the four-and-twenty hours. I do not know what the distance is, but I think it must be somewhere about eighty miles. You are correct about his walking from Kelso to Edinburgh, forty miles, to attend a public dinner. It was in 1822, when the king was there. Once, when disappointed in getting a place in the mail from Penrith

to Kendal, he gave his coat to the driver, set off on foot, reached Kendal some time before the coach, and then trudged on to Elleray.’”

But Wilson’s triumphs in “the schools” were not less remarkable than his athletic feats. The brilliancy he displayed in his final examination was long remembered among Oxford dons. He was a poet, too, and a talker of rare charm—an Admirable Crichton indeed, as much at home among wits and scholars over the port in the Common-room as among coachmen, guards, and bruisers over the “early purl” in the tavern.

To most men he seemed the very impersonation of joyous life, and yet there was another and a very different side to his character known only to a few intimates, and that side was as gloomy as the other was radiant. He had formed an attachment for a mysterious “Margaret,” who was equally attached to him; but in deference to the prejudices of his mother he would not marry her, and consequently both of them were miserable. He was continually passing from transports of ardent hope to moods of deep despair, which he sought to drown in reckless dissipation. At one time he seriously thought of joining Mungo Park, the then celebrated African explorer, in his last expedition to the Niger which ended so tragically. That idea, however, he abandoned; but it is strange to find the idolised hero of Oxford, the jovial, rollicking, reckless, brilliant John Wilson, writing thus to his intimate friend Findlay: “I feel that I am doomed to be eternally wretched. . . . I will be glad to see you, but the word happy will never again be joined to the name of John Wilson.” One is

irresistibly reminded of the gloomy epistles indited by Wilkins Micawber, having delivered himself of which that immortal optimist entered with increased zest into the delights of skittles and punch. But there really was a streak of melancholy running through Wilson's character, which grew more morbid and pronounced in his later years, till at times it threatened to darken his reason.

Soon after leaving Oxford he purchased the beautiful cottage of Elleray, on the banks of Windermere, where some of the happiest days of his life were passed. James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, however, thought it a poor place for a Scottish sportsman to dwell in. Twenty years later, when Wilson, after many vicissitudes, again took up his abode at Elleray, the “Shepherd” wrote thus to him :

“MY DEAR AND HONOURED JOHN,—I never thought you had been so unconscionable as to desire a sportsman on the 11th or even the 13th of August to leave Ettrick Forest for the bare scraggy hills of Westmoreland!—Ettrick Forest, where the black cocks, and white cocks, brown cocks, and grey cocks, ducks, plovers, and pease-weeps, and willy-whaups are as thick as the flocks that cover her mountains, and come to the hills of Westmoreland that can nourish nothing better than a castril or stonechat! To leave the great yellow fin of Yarrow, or the still larger grey-locher for the degenerate fry of Troutbeck, Esthwaite, or even Wastwater! No, no, the request will not do ; it is an unreasonable one, and therefore not unlike yourself ; for besides,

what would become of Old North and Blackwood, and all our friends for game, were I to come to Elleray just now? I know of no home of man where I could be so happy within doors with so many lovely and joyous faces around me; but this is not the season for in-door enjoyments; they must be reaped on the wastes among the blooming heath, by the silver spring, or swathed in the delicious breeze of the wilderness. Elleray with all its sweets could never have been my choice for a habitation, and perhaps you are the only Scottish gentleman who ever made such a choice, and still persists in maintaining it in spite of every disadvantage. Happy days to you, and a safe return!

Yours most respectfully,

JAMES HOGG."

But Wilson revelled in the place. He had a fleet of eight sailing boats on Windermere, besides a fine ten-oared Oxford barge. He indulged, too, in another sport, popular then, but discredited now—cock-fighting. He had a passion for game-cocks, and had at times as many as sixty or seventy in training. One grand main was fought in the big new drawing-room which he built on to his cottage. He had the flooring covered with sods, and invited all the neighbouring farmers to witness the sport and assist at a jolly supper afterwards.

The master of Elleray was an enthusiastic patron of all the athletic sports in which the dalesmen delighted. Of his love of wrestling, and his own prowess in that manly pastime, Mr. Waugh has left us an interesting record.

Mr. Waugh, in his wanderings in Westmoreland, encountered at Wastdale Head, in the person of the innkeeper there, one of the most characteristic specimens that could be found of a genuine old Laker, William Ritson by name. “I was most interested,” says the writer, “in Ritson’s anecdotes of famous men who visited Wastdale. He had wandered many a day with Professor Wilson, Wordsworth, De Quincey and others. Ritson had been a famous wrestler in his youth, and had won many a country belt in Cumberland. He once wrestled with Wilson, and threw him twice out of three falls. But he owned the Professor was ‘a verra bad un to lick.’ Wilson beat him at jumping. He could jump twelve yards in three jumps with a great stone in each hand. Ritson could only manage eleven and three-quarters. ‘T’ first time Professor Wilson cam to Wastd’le Head,’ said Ritson, ‘he hed a tent set up in a field, and he gat it weel stock’t wi’ bread, an’ beef, an’ cheese, an’ rum, an’ ale, an’ sic like. Then he gedder’t up my granfadder, an’ Thomas Tyson, an’ Isaac Fletcher, an’ Joseph Stable, an’ aad Robert Grave, an’ some mair, an’ there was gay deed among ’em. Then nowt would surra, but he mun hev a boat, an’ they mun all hev a sail. Well, when they gat into t’ boat, he tell’t un to be particklar careful, for he was liable to git giddy in t’ head, an’ if yan ov his giddy fits sud chance to cum on, he mud happen tumble into t’ water. Well, that pleased ’em all gaily weel, an’ they said they’d tak verra girt care on him. Then he leaned back an’ called oot that they mun pull quicker. So they did, and what does Wilson do then but topples

ower eb'm ov his back i' t' watter with a splash. Then there was a girt cry—"Eh, Mr. Wilson's i' t' watter!" an' yan click't, an' annudder click't, but nean o' them could get hod on him, an' there was sic a scrowe as niver. At last yan o' them gat him round t' neck as he popped up at teal o' t' boat, an' Wilson taad him to kep a good hod, for he mud happen slip him ageàn. But what, it was nowt but yan ov his bit pranks, he was snurkin' an' laughin' all t' time. Wilson was a fine, gay, girt-hearted fellow, as strang as a lion, an' he hed sic antics as niver man hed. Whatever ye sed tull him ye'd get yowr change back for it gaily soon. . . . Aa remember, there was a "Murry Neet" at Wastd'le Head that varra time, an' Wilson and t' aad parson was there among t' rest. When they'd gotten a bit on, Wilson med a sang about t' parson. He med it reight off o' t' stick end. He began wi' t' parson first, then he gat to t' Pope, an' then he turned it to t' devil, an' sic like, till he hed 'em falling off their cheers wi' fun. T' parson was quite astonished, an' rayder vex't an' all, but at last he burst out laughin' wi' t' rest. He was like. Naabody could stand it. . . . T' seàm neet there was yan o' their wives cum to fetch her husband heàm, an' she was rayder ower strang i' t' tung wi' him afore t' heàl comp'ny. Well, he took it all i' good pairt, but as he went away he shouted oot t' aad minister, "'Od dang ye, parson, it war ye 'at teed us two tegidder!" . . . It was a' life an' murth, amang us, as lang as Professor Wilson was at Wastd'le Head."

When I was in the Lake country in 1860 I met a

boatman on Ullswater, William Backhouse by name, a fine, stalwart dalesman who remembered John Wilson well, and bore similar testimony to the Professor's enthusiastic interest in all the manly sports and jolly revels of the country-side.

Of fishing John Wilson had his fill at Elleray. One great angling excursion deserves special mention, not so much perhaps on account of the sport it afforded as for the illustrious names of most of the anglers. On a lovely summer day in the year 1809 the solitudes of Eskdale were invaded by such an army of anglers as had assuredly never been seen there before. The anglers numbered twelve, among whom, with Wilson as chief, were Wordsworth, De Quincey, Alexander Blair, the two Astleys, and Humphries. There were no less than twenty servants to look after the tents and baggage, which were carried on the backs of a string of twelve ponies. For a week the party sojourned in the mountains, and perhaps the long "cracks" in the evenings, with Wordsworth, De Quincey, and Wilson himself in their best talking form, afforded more pleasure than the day's sport among the trout, though all of them were more or less skilful anglers. It was, at any rate, a unique fishing party. Probably the only thing of the kind comparable to it is to be found in the experiences of Charles Kingsley, Matthew Arnold, Tom Hughes, and James Anthony Froude, on the rare occasions when those four foregathered, rod in hand, at the river-side.

Amongst his other accomplishments John Wilson reckoned that of dancing, in which he had few equals. It was as a dancer that he made the acquaintance of Miss

Jane Penny, the daughter of a Liverpool merchant, "the Belle of the Lakes," and to her he was married on May 11th, 1811. Four happy years they passed at Ellera, and then came the crash which suddenly reduced Wilson from wealth to poverty. The whole of his fortune had been entrusted to an uncle for investment, and was lost in rash speculations. There was nothing for it but to leave Ellera. So John Wilson, with his wife and children, went to live with his mother at Edinburgh.

By this time John Wilson was known to fame as the author of two poems, "The Isle of Palms" and "The City of the Plague"—graceful, eloquent, with some thrills of pathos and passion in them, but with no ring of the genius that makes poetry live. Added, however, to his picturesque personality, they made him a notable figure in Edinburgh. Thomas Carlyle has left us one of his mordant portraits of John Wilson as he was at this time.

"I knew his figure well ; remember first seeing him in Princes Street on a bright April afternoon [probably 1814] exactly forty years ago. A tall ruddy figure, with plenteous blonde hair, with bright blue eyes, fixed, as if in haste towards some distant object, strode rapidly along, clearing the press to the left of us, close by the railings, near where Blackwood's shop now is. Westward he in haste ; we slowly eastward. Campbell whispered me, 'That is Wilson of "The Isle of Palms,"' which poem I had not read, being then quite mathematical, scientific, etc., for extraneous reasons, as I now see them to have been. The broad-shouldered, stately bulk of the man struck me ; his flashing eye, copious, dishevelled head of

hair, and rapid unconcerned progress, like that of a plough through stubble."

"A Norse demi-god" was the phrase his admirers, and their name was Legion, loved to apply to him. De Quincey, however, whose judgment is entitled to respect, did not think him handsome. "His complexion," writes the "English Opium-eater," "was too florid: hair of a hue quite unsuited to that complexion: eyes not good, having no apparent depth, but seeming mere surfaces, and, in fact, no one feature that could be called fine except the lower region of his face, the mouth, chin, and the parts adjacent which were then truly elegant and Ciceronian." One must be acquainted with the bust of Cicero to understand that final comparison, which smacks of the fantastic. But whatever difference of opinion might exist as to his features, all who knew John Wilson were agreed as to the grandeur and majesty of his figure—a noble and impressive combination of stateliness and strength.

Of his social qualities Thomas Carlyle gives us a glimpse in one of his letters:

"Last night," he writes, "I supped with John Wilson, Professor of Moral Philosophy here, author of the 'Isle of Palms,' etc., a man of the most fervid temperament, fond of all stimulating things from tragic poetry down to whisky punch. He snuffed, and smoked cigars, and drank liquors, and talked in the most indescribable style. It was at the lodging of one John Gordon, a very good young man from Kirkcudbright, who sometimes comes here. Daylight came on us before we parted; indeed, it was towards three o'clock as the Professor

and I walked home, smoking as we went. I had scarcely either eaten or drunk, being a privileged person, but merely enjoyed the strange volcanic eruptions of our poet's convivial genius. He is a broad sincere man of six feet, with long dishevelled flax-coloured hair, and two blue eyes keen as an eagle's. Now and then he sank into a brown study, and seemed dead in the eye of law. About two o'clock he was sitting in this state, smoking languidly, his nose begrimed with snuff, his face hazy and inert; when all at once flashing into existence, he inquired of John Gordon, with an irresistible air, 'I hope, Mr. Gordon, you don't believe in universal damnation?' It was wicked, but all hands burst into inextinguishable laughter. But I expect to see Wilson in a more philosophic key ere long; he has promised to call on me, and is, on the whole, a man I should like to know better. Geniuses of any sort, especially of so kindly a sort, are so very rare in this world."

That expectation was never realised: Wilson and Carlyle never became intimate. Indeed, there seemed to be a mutual antipathy which kept them apart; though, in the first instance, Wilson no doubt was to blame, for he never paid that promised call, and his excuses for not doing so were so palpably insincere, not to say mendacious, that Carlyle resented them.

In 1817 *Blackwood's Magazine* was started, in which adventure he and John Gibson Lockhart were the two leading spirits, and it was just about this time that Wilson started on his romantic fishing tour in the Highlands, accompanied by his wife. Mr. William

Stewart, in his "Highland Sketches," gives this graphic picture of the two pedestrians :

"On a fine summer evening, the eyes of a primitive northern village were attracted by the appearance of two travellers, apparently man and wife, coming into the village, dressed like cairds or gipsies. The man was tall, broad-shouldered, and of stalwart proportions; his fair hair floated redundant over neck and shoulders, and his red beard and whiskers were of portentous size. He bore himself with the assured and careless air of a strong man rejoicing in his strength. On his back was a capacious knapsack, and his slouched hat garnished with fishing hooks and tackle, showed he was as much addicted to fishing as to making spoons :

A stalwart tinkler wight seemed he,
That weel could mend a pot or pan;
And deftly he could throw the flee,
Or neatly weave the willow wan'.

The appearance of his companion contrasted strikingly with that of her mate. She was of slim and fragile form, and more like a lady in her walk and bearing than any wife of a caird that had ever been seen in those parts. The natives were somewhat surprised to see this great caird making for the head inn, the 'Gordon Arms,' where the singular pair actually took up their quarters for several days. Thence they were in the habit of sallying forth, each armed with a fishing-rod, to the river banks, a circumstance the novelty of which, as regarded the tinker's wife, excited no small curiosity, and many conjectures were hazarded as to the real character of the mysterious couple.

A local hero named the King of the Drovers, moved by admiration of the peculiar proportions of this king of the cairds, felt a great desire to come into closer relations with the stranger. He was soon gratified. A meeting was arranged, in order to try whether the son of the mountain or the son of the plain were the better man in wrestling, leaping, running, and drinking; and in all of these manly exercises the great drover, probably for the first time, found himself more than matched."

Mrs. Wilson, slender and delicate Englishwoman though she was, tramped like a hardy Scotswoman to the manner born. On one occasion she walked twenty-five miles in a single day. Between July 5th and August 26th they covered 350 miles on foot, "sojourning in divers glens from Sabbath unto Sabbath, fishing, eating, and staring." Of the sport he had John Wilson says: "I killed in the Highlands 170 dozen of trout. One day 19½ dozen, another 7 dozen. I, one morning, killed ten trouts that weighed 9 lbs. In Loch Awe in three days I killed 76 lbs. of fish all with the fly. The folks were astonished." If they were astonished at that, I wonder what they would have thought of Dr. Robertson's great feat in the August of 1833 at Ballater, where in a single day he killed in a small loch adjoining the stream thirty-six dozen of trout, weighing close on 250 lbs.!

On their return to Edinburgh John Wilson and his wife were the "lions of the season." Everyone expected that Mrs. Wilson's beautiful complexion would be totally ruined by exposure to wind and sun and rain. But at her first party old Mrs. Mure, of Caldwell, after

scanning her face closely, exclaimed, “Weel, I declare she’s come back bonnier than ever!”

Of John Wilson’s extraordinary keenness in sport, especially his favourite sport, fishing, I may quote the following example given by one of his friends :

“At a point on the road near to the house which I now occupy, and close by the river-side, as he was on his way to Achlian, a large party of tinkers were pitching their tents. There were men, women, and children—a band—some preparing to go to fish for their supper in the adjoining pool, and some, more full of action, were leaping. They were tall powerful young men, ready for any frolic, and all the *bonhomie* of Mr. Wilson’s nature was stirred in him. He joined the group; talked with them and leaped with them. They were rejoicing in their sport, when he, finding himself hard pressed, stripped off coat and shoes; but the river had had its channel once on the spot; it had left a sharp stone, which was only concealed by the thin coating of earth over it; his heel came down on that stone; it wounded him severely; and, unable to bear a shoe on, he had to go to Achlian. The tinkers would rather that the accident had happened to one of themselves, and they procured a cart in the neighbourhood in which he was conveyed to Achlian. The heel was carefully dealt with there by all but himself. Mrs. Smith, then a little girl, tells me that her mother remonstrated often, but in vain; for he would fish, though scarcely able to limp; and one day, as he was fishing from the shore, a large trout, such as Loch Awe is remarkable for, was hooked by him.

His line was weak, and afraid to lose it, he cast himself into the loch, yielding to the motions of the strong creature until it became fatigued and manageable. Then he swam ashore with his victim in subjection, and brought it home ; but he was without the bandage, and his heel bleeding copiously.

This was no unusual mode of fishing with Christopher. As the Shepherd remarked : ' In he used to gang, out, out, out, and ever sae far out frae the point o' a promontory, sinking aye further and further doon, first to the waist-band o' his breeks, then up to the middle button o' his waistcoat, then to the verra breist, then to the oxters, then to the neck, and then to the verra chin o' him, sae that you wunnered how he could fling the flee ; till at last he would plump richt oot o' sight, till the Highlander on Ben Cruachan thocht him drooned. No he, indeed ; sae he takes to the sooming, and strikes awa wi' ae arm, for the tither had haud o' the rod ; and could ye believe 't, though it's as true as Scripture, fishing a' the time, that no a moment o' the cloudy day might be lost ; ettles at an island, a quarter o' a mile aff, wi' trees and an auld ruin o' a religious house, wherein beads used to be counted and wafers eaten, and mass muttered hundreds o' years ago ; and getting footing on the yellow sand, or the green sward, he but gies himself a shake, and ere the sun looks out o' the clud, has hyuckt a four-pounder, whom in four minutes (for it's a multiplying pirn the cretur uses) he lands, gasping through the giant gills, and glittering wi' a thousand spots, streaks, and stars, on the shore.' "

Of Wilson's eccentricities and the strange adventures he sometimes met with on his sporting excursions Mr. Alexander Dingwall gives an amusing instance :

“Mr. Wilson came to me (then living at Millbank, near Dingwall) in such peculiar circumstances as leads me to think he would have made some memoranda about it. He had been fishing in the Dee, and by some accident came to a fair at Tomintoul, where he saw a poor man much oppressed and ill-used by another, who was considered the bully of the country and whose name, I think he said, was Grant. Circumstances led to Mr. Wilson putting off his coat, and giving this fellow a thrashing, but on picking up the coat he found it rifled of his pocket-book containing all his money but a very few shillings ! In this state he left for Carrbridge, where he passed the night without more than enough of refreshment. In the morning he left for Inverness, and calling at the Post Office he found many letters to his address ; but not having money to pay the postage, the person in charge declined trusting him ! He then crossed Kessock Ferry with only a few pence, and arrived at Dingwall about midday, where I happened to be at the time, and was quite overjoyed at seeing him. He was dressed in white duck trowsers covered with mud, and his white hat entirely so with fishing gear.

In our rambles, which included some curious incidents, and which occupied several days, he fished wherever a loch or stream presented itself. We avoided *roads* entirely, and lived with the shepherds.”

Such stories as these might, to a certain extent,

justify that excellent old lady, Mrs. Grant, of Laggan, in making the following remarks, when in writing to a friend she burst forth upon the eccentricities of the young poet :

“ Did I ever tell you of one of the said poets we have in town here—indeed one of our intimates—the most provoking creature imaginable? He is young, handsome, witty ; has great learning, exuberant spirits, a wife and children that he doats on (circumstances one would think consolidating), and no vice that I know of, but on the contrary, virtuous principles and feelings. Yet his wonderful eccentricity would put anybody but his wife wild. She, I am convinced, was actually made on purpose for her husband, and has that kind of indescribable controlling influence over him that Catherine is said to have had over that wonderful savage, the Czar Peter.

Pray look at the last *Edinburgh Review*, and read the favourable article on John Wilson's ‘City of the Plague.’ He is the person in question.”

In July, 1820, John Wilson was appointed Professor of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh University, a post which brought him an average income of about £1,000 a year during the thirty years for which he held it. His eloquent and discursive lectures, lacking though they were in logic and philosophy, were a delight to the students, who worshipped their Professor as the very embodiment of “god-like manhood.”

Two years later he burst upon the literary world as “Christopher North,” the creator of the “Noctes Ambrosianæ,” which made the fortune of *Blackwood's*

Magazine, and were regarded as the most brilliant efflorescence of Wilson's genius. There is nothing like them in literature for their grotesque mixture of eloquent rhapsody and boisterous fooling, of sport, philosophy, criticism, conviviality, and buffoonery. Wilson let himself go with a vengeance in the “Noctes,” even to the verge of ribaldry. The fun is for the most part of the coarsest and broadest—pure farce, most of it. The men of that generation who laughed over Christopher's jests must have been very easily entertained.

There are in the “Noctes” passages of real eloquence, flashes of fine critical insight, gems of thought and expression that sparkle with the lustre of diamonds of the purest water; but the boozing and buffoonery are a sore trial to the patience of the modern reader who knew not Christopher and his *confrères* in the flesh. And one has the less patience with them because all that Gargantuan guzzling was a fiction. Those groaning tables laden with fish, flesh, and fowl, those heroic potations of toddy, had no existence but in Christopher's imagination. We know now that whilst Christopher North was penning those graphic pictures of gluttony and whisky-drinking, he was really dining on boiled fowl and potatoes, washed down with cold water, sitting in a bare, fireless room, scribbling by the light of a big tallow candle in a tin kitchen candlestick. As I think of that ghastly simulacrum of conviviality, of those forlorn Barmecide feasts, I feel that the “Noctes” are a fraud, and I could wish that Kit North had really been the glorious gourmand and toddy-drinker that he

paints himself. I love Scotland and her whisky well. Nowhere have I met bolder, stouter drinkers, or enjoyed more rational conviviality of the sort that brings no headache in the morning and keeps within the limit of becoming mirth. Wherefore I grieve to think that those symposia at Ambrose's are impositions, and those jolly *bon vivants* phantoms that never wore human flesh.

The grave duties of his professional chair did not interfere with John Wilson's love of sport or hamper his taste for unconventional adventure, as the following anecdote proves :

"About a year after he had entered upon his new duties the Professor was rambling during vacation-time in the South of Scotland, having for a while exchanged the gown for the old 'sporting-jacket.' On his return to Edinburgh, he was obliged to pass through Hawick, where, on his arrival, finding it to be fair-day, he readily availed himself of the opportunity to witness the amusements going on. These happened to include a 'little mill' between two members of the local 'fancy.' His interest in pugilism attracted him to the spot, where he soon discovered something very wrong, and a degree of injustice being perpetrated which he could not stand. It was the work of a moment to espouse the weaker side, a proceeding which naturally drew down upon him the hostility of the opposite party. The result was to him, however, of little consequence. There was nothing for it but to beat or be beaten. He was soon 'in position'; and before his unknown adversary well knew what was coming, the skilled fist of the Professor had planted such a 'facer' as did not require repetition.

Another ‘round’ was not called for ; and leaving the discomfited champion to recover at his leisure, the Professor walked coolly away to take his seat in the stage-coach, about to start for Edinburgh. He just reached it in time to secure a place inside, where he found two young men already seated. As a matter of course he entered into conversation with them, and before the journey was half over, they had become the best friends in the world. He asked all sorts of questions about their plans and prospects, and was informed they were going to attend College during the winter session. Among the classes mentioned were Leslie’s, Jameson’s, Wilson’s, and some others. ‘Oh! Wilson ; he is a queer fellow, I am told ; rather touched here’ (pointing significantly to his head); ‘odd, decidedly odd.’ The lads, somewhat cautiously, after the manner of their country, said they had heard strange stories reported of Professor Wilson, but it was not right to believe everything ; and that they would judge for themselves when they saw him. ‘Quite right, lads ; quite right ; but I assure you I know something of this fellow myself ; only this very forenoon at Hawick he got into a row with a great lubberly fellow for some unknown cause of offence, and gave him such a taste of his fist as won’t be soon forgotten ; the whole place was ringing with the story ; I wonder you did not hear of it.’ ‘Well,’ rejoined the lads, ‘we did hear something of the sort ; but it seemed so incredible that a Professor of Moral Philosophy should get himself mixed up with disreputable quarrels at a fair, we did not believe it.’ Wilson looked very grave, agreed that it was

certainly a most unbecoming position for a professor ; yet he was sorry to say that, having heard the whole story from an eye-witness, it was but too true. Dexterously turning the subject, he very soon banished all further discussion about the Professor, and held the delighted lads enchained in the interest of his conversation until they reached the end of the journey. On getting out of the coach, they politely asked him, as he seemed to know Edinburgh well, if he would direct them to a hotel. 'With pleasure, my young friends ; we shall go to a hotel together ; no doubt you are hungry and ready for dinner, and you shall dine with me.' A coach was called ; Wilson ordered the luggage to be placed outside, and gave directions to the driver, who in a short time pulled up at a very nice-looking house, with a small garden in front. The situation was rural, and there was so little of the aspect of a hotel about the place, that on alighting, the lads asked once or twice, if they had come to the right place ? 'All right, gentlemen ; walk in ; leave your trunks in the lobby. I have settled with the driver, and now I shall order dinner.' No time was lost, and very soon the two youths were conversing freely with their unknown friend, and enjoying themselves extremely in the satisfactory position of having thus accidentally fallen into such good company and good quarters. The deception, however, could not be kept up much longer ; and, in the course of the evening, Wilson let them know where they were, telling them they could now judge for themselves what sort of a fellow 'the Professor' was."

So long as he had any strength left the Professor

pursued with ardour the sports that he loved. In shooting he professed, like Colonel Hawker, to be a believer in the old flint-locks, and thus expresses his opinion upon them in the "Recreations":

"Let us inspect Brown Bess. Till sixty, we used a single barrel. At seventy we took to a double;—but dang detonators—we stick to the flint. 'Flint,' says Colonel Hawker, 'shoots strongest into the bird.' A percussion gun is quicker, but flint is fast enough, and it does, indeed, argue rather a confusion than a rapidity of ideas to find fault with lightning for being too slow. With respect to the flash in the pan, it is but a fair warning to ducks, for example, to dive if they can, and get out of the way of mischief. It is giving birds a chance for their lives, and is it not ungenerous to *grudge* it? When our gun goes to our shoulder, *that chance* is but small; for with double-barrel Brown Bess *it is* but word and a blow,—the blow first, and long *h-f-a*—could say Jack Robinson, the *gorcock* plays *th*

heather. But we beg leave to set the *gun* for ever by one single clencher. We have *shot* with bird—grouse—at fifty successive *shots*

not. And mind you, not *one*

are *chicken* butchers—*not*

d *as* their *power*

not *one* of *the*

the *most*

the *most*

the *most*

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the *most*

the *most*

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the *most*

"One day Professor Wilson was late in appearing ; perhaps ten or twelve minutes after the class hour—an unusual thing with him, for he was punctual. We had seen him go into his private room. We got uneasy, and at last it was proposed that I should go in, and see what it was that detained him. To my latest hour I will remember the sight I saw on entering. Having knocked and received no answer, I gently opened the door, and there I found the Professor lying at full length on the floor with his gown on. Instinctively I rubbed his head, and raised it up, kneeling with the noble head resting on my breast. I could not, of course, move. But in a few minutes in came other students, wondering in turn what was keeping *me*, and we together raised the Professor up into his chair. I caught the words, 'God bless you!' Gradually he got better, and we forced him to sit still, and never dream of lecturing that day or for a time. He was very reluctant to consent. I remember too we spoke of calling a cab, but he said 'No,' it would shake him too much. In about half an hour he walked home. . . .

Twice after this I saw him, at his own request, and always on the subject of his lectures ; for he was bent on what he called a 'reconstruction' of his theory for the ensuing session ; while it was but too plain to those around him that he was not likely to see the College again. The old lion sat in his arm-chair, yellow-maned and toothless, prelecting with the old volubility and eloquence, and with occasionally the former flash of the bright blue eye, soon drooping into dulness again. I still remember his tremulous 'God bless you!' as the

door closed for the last time. How different from that fresh and vigorous old age in which he had moved among us the year before!"

In the following year Christopher North made his last pilgrimage to the Highlands, the scene of those glorious days with rod and gun which he has immortalised in the glowing rhapsodies of the "Recreations." His daughter gives this pathetic picture of the tour:

"Had my father been able to endure fatigue we too would have had something to boast of; but he was unable to do more than loiter by the river-side close to the inn—never without his rod. Alas, how changed the manner of his sport from that of his prime! We must make use of his own illustration as he speaks of the past and present; for North's exploits in angling are varied enough to be brought forward at any point of his life. He says to the Shepherd,—

'In me the passion of the sport is dead—or say rather dull; yet have I gentle enjoyment still in the "Angler's silent Trade." So seemed it then on the banks of the Dochart.

But Heavens, my dear James! How in youth, and prime of manhood too, I used to gallop to the glens like a deer, over a hundred heathery hills, to devour the dark rolling river, or the blue breezy loch! How leaped my heart to hear the thunder of the nearing waterfall! and lo, yonder flows, at last, the long dim shallow rippling hazel-banked line of music among the broomy braes, all astir with black fins on its surface; and now the *feed is on*, teeming with swift-shooting,

bright-bounding, and silver-shining scaly life, most beauteous to behold, at every soft alighting of the deceptive line, captivating and irresistible even among a shower of natural leaf-born flies, a swarm in the air from the mountain woods.'

A picture of the past visiting the present, as time glides on, making more perceptible the cruel changes which come to mortal strength. How now do his feet touch the heather? Not as of old, with a bound, but with slow and unsteady step, supported on the one hand by his stick, while the other carries his rod. The breeze gently moves his locks, no longer glittering with the light of life, but dimmed by its decay. Yet are his shoulders broad and unbent. The lion-like presence is somewhat softened down, but not gone. He surely will not venture into the deeps of the water, for only one hand is free for 'a cast,' and those large stones, now slippery with moss, are dangerous stumbling blocks in the way. Besides, he promised his daughters he would not wade, but on the contrary, walk quietly with them by the river's edge, there gliding 'at its own sweet will.' Silvery bands of pebbled shore, leading to loamy-coloured pools, dark as the glow of a southern eye, how could he resist the temptation of near approach? In he goes, up to the ankles, then to the knees, tottering every other step, but never falling. Trout after trout he catches, small ones certainly, but plenty of them. Into his pocket with them, all this time manœuvring in the most skilful manner both stick and rod; until weary, he is obliged to rest on the bank, sitting with his feet in the water, laughing at his

daughter's horror, and obstinately continuing the sport in spite of all remonstrance. At last he gives in and retires. Wonderful to say, he did not seem to suffer from these imprudent liberties. Occasionally he was contented to remain away from the water, enjoying the less exciting interest of watching others. His son John delighted him by the great achievement of capturing two fine salmon, their united weight being about forty-five pounds. It was a pleasant holiday-time. There was no lack of merriment, and though my father was not in his best spirits, he rallied now and then from the gloom that oppressed him at the outset of the excursion.”

But from that time he broke up rapidly. It was pitiable to those who had known the great athlete and sportsman in all the full flush of his splendid manhood to watch the swift progress of senile decay. There is not a more pathetic spectacle in the world than that of a big, strong man reduced to utter feebleness—the mind as well as the body shrunken into childish helplessness. Yet in John Wilson the ruling passion was strong in death. It was to the moorlands and lochs and rivers which he loved that his thoughts went back as the sands of life were running out. Here is the touching picture which his daughter gives of Christopher North's last hours :

“ It was an affecting sight to see him busy, nay, quite absorbed with the fishing tackle scattered about his bed, propped up with pillows,—his noble head, yet glorious with its flowing locks, carefully combed by attentive hands, and falling on each side of his unfaded face. How neatly he picked out each elegantly dressed fly

from its little bunch, drawing it out with trembling hand along the white coverlet, and then replacing it in his pocket-book, he would tell ever and anon of the streams he used to fish in of old, and of the deeds he had performed in his childhood and youth. These precious relics of a bygone sport were wont to be brought out in the early spring, long before sickness confined him to his room. It had been a habit for many years, but then the 'sporting jacket' was donned soon after, and angling was no more a mere delightful day-dream, but a reality 'that took him knee-deep or waistband-high, through river-feeding torrents, to the glorious music of his running and ringing reel.' This outward life was at an end. With something of a prophetic spirit did he write in former days when he affected the age he had not attained,—how love for all sports would live in his heart for ever: 'Our spirit burns within us, but our limbs are palsied, and our feet must brush the heather no more. Lo! how beautifully these fast travelling pointers do their work on that black mountain's breast! intersecting it into parallelograms, and squares, and circles, and now all a stoop on a sudden, as if frozen to death! Higher up among the rocks, and cliffs, and stones we see a stripling, whose ambition it is to strike the sky with his forehead, and wet his hair in the misty cloud, pursuing the ptarmigan now in their variegated summer dress, seen even among the unmelted snows. Never shall Eld deaden our sympathies with the pastimes of our fellow-men any more than with their highest raptures, their profoundest griefs.' Nor did he belie the words."

The end was not long in coming. John Wilson died at midnight on April 1st, 1854.

In the literature of sport Christopher North is by far the biggest figure we have had yet. No one has ever embodied in such glowing eloquence the poetry of sport, no one has ever thrown such a halo of romance round the worship of rod and gun. Charles Kingsley, perhaps, might have equalled him had he chosen to devote himself to the task, though if you compare Kingsley's rhapsody on fox-hunting in “My Winter Garden” with Wilson's in the “Recreations,” I think you will note that the parson does not let himself go with the same freedom and dash as the Professor. Kingsley's was a sedater mind—there was not in him the reckless, boyish irresponsibility and impetuosity of Christopher. The Englishman, too, was more orderly and methodical than the perfervid Scot. In Wilson's mind there was, I think, to be found as curious a jumble of incongruities as in his library, where, his daughter tells us, “resting upon the ‘Wealth of Nations,’ lay shining coils of gut, set off by pretty pink twinings. Peeping out from ‘Boxiana,’ in juxtaposition with the ‘Faëry Queen,’ were no end of delicately dressed *flies*; and pocket-books well-filled with gear for the ‘gentle craft’ found company with Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, while fishing-rods in pieces stretched their elegant length along the shelves, embracing a whole set of poets.”

But look at him from what point of view you will, John Wilson was a *big* man—big in heart, in intellect, in body. And how lovable he was! See him there among his grandchildren, turning the nursery into an imaginary

loch, and with real rods, lines, and creels hauling in phantom trout of fabulous size, to the ecstatic delight of the tiny anglers! See him among his dogs—Newfoundlands, terriers, setters, Dandies—with caressing hand acknowledging the glances of dumb devotion from their melting eyes! See him sitting in his chair with the pet sparrow, rescued years before as a fledgeling from the gutter, perched on his shoulder or tugging impudently at his whiskers! See him among the trout of Loch Awe or the grouse on Drumlochty moor! He is always the same big, human-hearted creature—strong and gentle—a grand athlete mentally and physically—a true sportsman of the finest type.

The Cokes of Holkham

AMONG "the stately homes of England," Holkham House, in Norfolk, the seat of the present Earl of Leicester, is, for a variety of reasons, one of the most remarkable. John Blome, an enthusiastic East Anglian, described it some seventy odd years ago as "one of the most magnificent piles of architecture in this kingdom, and perhaps in the whole world." Brewer, in his "Beauties of England and Wales," if a little more discriminating, is scarcely less emphatic in his praise. "There may be houses," he writes, "larger and more magnificent, and in some more uniformity and justness of proportion may be visible ; but human genius could not contrive anything in which convenience could be more apparent than it is in this."

The candid person who looks for the first time upon the huge building with its 344 feet of frontage, its great central block with the Corinthian portico and its four wings branching off in mathematical uniformity, will probably pronounce it the reverse of beautiful. But if he be privileged to examine the interior he will most certainly admit that if externally

the *ugliest*, it is internally the *most comfortable* house in England.

That it should be something out of the common way was only to be expected from the time and thought and money expended upon the building of it. Thomas Coke, after long consultations with his friend the Earl of Burlington, the accomplished virtuoso of Burlington House, and that nobleman's brilliant henchman William Kent, painter, sculptor, architect, and landscape gardener, commenced building his great "pleasure-house" in 1734 from designs by Inigo Jones, based upon the happiest efforts of the great sixteenth-century Italian architect Andrea Palladio. When, ten years later, Thomas Coke was raised to the peerage as Viscount Coke of Holkham and Earl of Leicester, the elaborately planned mansion in Norfolk was still far from being ready for habitation. And, indeed, though the Earl lived to inhabit his splendid house, he never saw it finished, for it was not till five years after his death and thirty years from the laying of the foundation stone that Holkham House was finally completed by his widowed Countess.

Over the entrance door of the fine Egyptian Hall, from which the rest of the noble suite of state apartments radiate, is the following inscription :

This seat, on an open and barren estate, was planned, decorated, and inhabited, the middle of the eighteenth century, by Thomas Coke, Earl of Leicester.

Probably it never occurred to the said Thomas Coke, Earl of Leicester, that he could do anything better to improve his "open and barren estate" than build upon it this "sumptuous edifice." That the poor and miser-



after the Holkham picture by Gainsborough.

Thomas William Coke, Earl of Leicester.

able soil of Holkham, fit only to produce scanty crops of rye, could ever repay the cost of scientific cultivation would have seemed to him a thing as reasonable to expect as the extraction of sunbeams out of cucumbers. And he would doubtless have regarded as a lunatic the prophet who should have foretold that his own grand-nephew should, within fifty years of his death, turn these barren acres into the richest arable land in Norfolk, transform Holkham Park from open warren into one of the most beautifully wooded demesnes in England, and raise the rental of the estate from £2,000 to upwards of £20,000.

Yet all this and more was accomplished in the lifetime and by the indomitable energy of one man, Thomas William Coke, known far and wide among his contemporaries as "Coke of Norfolk," the Father of modern Agriculture.

But great as Thomas William Coke was as an agriculturist, he was hardly less great as a sportsman—to him Holkham owes that sporting renown which has been so splendidly maintained by his son, a renown which I may almost call world-wide, for the vast game-preserves have few rivals in the three kingdoms, and the Holkham annals contain some of the most notable shooting feats on record. In this gallery of "Kings of the Gun," therefore, "Coke of Norfolk" must be assigned a foremost place. And now let me sketch his career.

When Thomas Coke, Earl of Leicester, the builder of Holkham House, died on April 20th, 1759, all his honours became extinct, and the Countess, his widow, had a life interest in his estate. On her death all the

lands and hereditaments of the late Earl came into the possession of his sister's son Wenman Roberts, who took the name of Coke. The eldest son of Wenman Roberts Coke was Thomas William Coke, born in London on May 6th, 1754. One of the boy's earliest recollections was that of being brought to a window to see a fox killed by Mr. Archer's hounds in *Hanover Square*! For those were days when Oxford Street was open on one side to the country, and snipe were often flushed and shot where Edgware road now commences. That sight Thomas William never forgot. It stirred the Nimrod spirit in him. From that moment he cherished the ambition of becoming a Master of Fox-hounds, and he did not rest till he had realised it. Fox-hunting was a passion with him. When he came into his estates he started a pack of his own, and for many years was renowned as one of the most daring riders in England. But much as he loved hunting, he loved shooting more, at any rate in his later years. He was "entered to" the gun (to use a hunting expression) at an early age. When he was a boy he used to rise with the sun to shoot, and Longford Hall, in Derbyshire, where he was brought up, afforded him capital sport. Boys are often better shots at snipe than men; but not many boys, I think, have equalled young Coke's feat of shooting sixty snipe in a couple of days while he was yet in his early teens.

Thomas William's first visit to Holkham, of which he was one day to be the master, took place just after he had left Eton. He went there at the special invitation of the Countess of Leicester, his great-aunt, who is

described as "one of the most punctilious dames of her time." She had been a widow for some years, but she abated not one jot of the stiff ceremonial state which had been kept up in the Earl's lifetime, and probably young Coke never passed a more wearisome time in his life than those six weeks during which he was the Countess's guest at Holkham.

Among her ladyship's many fads was a rabid aversion to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, which she believed to be hotbeds of atheism, socialism, and immorality. She was so anxious to keep her great-nephew away from these pestilent seats of learning that she offered him a handsome annual allowance if he would travel instead of graduating at either university. Thomas William accepted the offer, and soon afterwards started for the Continent. His good looks, his graceful figure and attractive manners gained him friends among the men and admirers among the women wherever he went.

At Rome, where he made a long stay, he was known as the "handsome young Englishman," and it was rumoured that he was a special favourite with the young and beautiful Countess of Albany, then the newly wedded bride of "Bonnie Prince Charlie," the last of the Stuarts.

Louisa von Stolberg had already repented of her marriage to a man old enough to be her father and a drunkard and a rake to boot. She was not yet twenty, and was naturally attracted by the gallant and handsome young Englishman, who was but a year her junior and showed his admiration for her in most unmistakable

fashion. Horace Walpole, who was *au courant* with every bit of scandal in Europe, writing under date of August 18th, 1774, says: "The young Mr. Coke is returned from his travels, in love with the Pretender's queen, who has permitted him to have her picture." The latter statement, however, is not quite correct. The Countess of Albany insisted on making her youthful admirer a present of his own portrait, which is now at Longford Hall, Derbyshire, the seat of his second son, Mr. Edward Coke. Lord Albemarle says that the portrait was given "as an acknowledgment of the impression which young Coke's good looks had produced on the Countess." He is represented with a mask in his hand and attired in a pink and white masquerade dress. In the background of the picture is a statue of Cleopatra reclining in the act of applying the asp to her arm, and the face and figure of the love-sick "serpent of old Nile" are said to be those of the Countess of Albany. If this be so, it was an ingenious way of presenting her admirer with her own portrait without committing herself, and in a suggestive guise, too, which must have been highly flattering to the young Englishman, who would so willingly have played the part of Antony.

Another notable memento of Mr. Coke's sojourn in Rome is preserved at Holkham in the shape of a fine statue of Diana, which a romantic antiquarian fondly imagines to be the identical statue mentioned by Cicero in his oration against Verres as having been taken from Sicily by the Carthaginians, recaptured from them by Scipio Africanus, and restored by him to the Sicilians. Whether this be so or not, the statue is unquestionably

one of great value and antiquity, and has a further interest from the fact that Coke obtained it under such peculiar circumstances that he was arrested and imprisoned, and only released at the urgent solicitations of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, who acted under strong pressure from the Countess of Albany, of whom he, too, like the young Englishman, was deeply enamoured. The price paid for the statue was £1,500.

On his return to England after these romantic adventures Thomas William Coke prepared to settle down as an English country gentleman, and as a first step crushed his sentimental attachment for the beautiful Countess Louisa under foot and took to himself a wife, a woman as beautiful if not as charming as his first love—to wit, Jane, sister of James, first Baron Sherborne, and youngest daughter of James Lennox Dutton, of Lough Crew, county Meath.

On April 11th, 1776, Wenman Roberts Coke died, and Thomas William succeeded to the estates of Longford, in Derbyshire, and Holkham, in Norfolk. In the same year, very much against his will, for sport was far more to his taste than politics, he consented to become Member for Norfolk in the Whig interest, and with only one short break he represented that constituency for thirty years. To quote one of his eulogists: "He has ever been the independent, bold, uncompromising enemy of every species of aggression upon the liberty or the property of his countrymen, and has ever denounced with unswerving zeal every form of corruption."

He was among the minority who voted against the American War in 1776, and he moved the petition

for the independence of the American colonies, which was seconded by General Conway, who also accompanied Coke when the latter presented the petition to the King. Some years later a graceful recognition of the part then played by Coke was made by Mr. Stephenson, the United States Ambassador, who, on paying a visit to Holkham, thus expressed himself :

“ I, the representative of fourteen millions of freemen, thought it my first duty on my arrival in England to pay my respects and offer the grateful acknowledgment of my countrymen to the man who had acted so early and so noble a part in vindication of America.”

Over one of the chimney-pieces in the saloon at Holkham is a charming full-length picture of Coke by Gainsborough, the last portrait, I believe, painted by the great artist, who thenceforth confined himself to landscapes. Mr. Coke is depicted in the act of loading a gun ; a dog is at his feet. He wears long boots, a broad-brimmed hat, and the shooting-jacket of a century ago. Apart from its merit as a work of art, this picture has an historical interest, as exhibiting the actual dress in which Coke appeared before George III. when, as knight of the shire, he presented an address from the county of Norfolk, praying the King to recognise the independence of the American colonies.

But he was not always popular with his constituents. The Earl of Albemarle, in his “ Fifty Years of My Life,” gives the following graphic picture of a desperate attack made upon Coke at the time of the Anti-Corn Law agitation :

“ The high price of wheat and the low price of

wages in 1815, led many of the working classes in the provincial towns to hold tumultuous meetings for the repeal of the Corn Laws. Mr. Coke, as a true disciple of Fox, was no believer in Adam Smith's doctrine respecting a free trade in grain, and always voted, in common with other county members, for 'protection to agriculture.' In the month of March, 1815, he and my father attended a Cattle Show in the Norwich Castle Ditches. On the same day, an Anti-Corn Law mob paraded the streets, preceded by a man bearing a small loaf on a pole. Mr. Coke was immediately recognised. 'Let us seize the villain,' cried some of the weavers, 'and before night we will have his heart on a gridiron.' At the same moment they made a rush towards their intended victim. In the crowd, a stalwart poacher, whom my father had once befriended, formed with his body a temporary barrier between the mob and the object of their resentment. Coke and my father took advantage of the momentary respite, and amidst a shower of stones scrambled over some cattle-pens. A butcher named Kett, seeing their danger, opened the door of one of his pens, and having first twisted the tail of a large bull, let him loose on the crowd. The beast, maddened with pain, went bellowing and galloping down the hill. The mob dispersed in a trice, but quickly reassembled in greater force. The Riot Act was read, and the military—a regiment of Black Brunswickers (soon to deal with a more formidable foe)—was called out. One trooper was wounded by a stone.

In the meanwhile the fugitives made their escape

to the 'Angel,' now the 'Royal' Hotel. The gates were closed; the Anti-Corn Law rioters assembled round the inn. It was whispered that Coke would be found in the boot of the London night coach, now about to take its departure. The gates were opened, the coach was searched,—no Coke was to be found. He and my father, having escaped by the back way, were on their road to Quidenham, where they arrived safely the same evening."

But it is not as a politician that I am concerned with "Coke of Norfolk," it is at Holkham amongst his cattle and his game, as farmer and sportsman, that I have it in my mind to picture him.

When Thomas William Coke, on the death of his father, succeeded to the Holkham estates, he found the inheritance a poor one. His predecessors had been content to let the fat manors and rich collieries of Longford supply them with revenue, and had expected little from their barren Norfolk farms. The whole district round Holkham was unenclosed; there was little or no attempt at cultivation, for the land would produce nothing but scanty crops of rye. The sheep were all of the miserable old Norfolk breed, and, with the exception of a few milch-cows, cattle there were none. The average rent was not two shillings an acre. Probably things would never have been much better had not Mr. Coke been forced to take up farming himself. It came about in this way.

The Great Park Farm, one of the best on the estate, had been leased to a Mr. Butt at one shilling and sixpence an acre, and subsequently at three shillings.

When the latter lease expired Mr. Coke offered to renew it at five shillings per acre, tithe-free. This offer Mr. Butt declined; and as no other tenant was forthcoming, Mr. Coke resolved to take the farm into his own hands.

Mr. Walter Rye, notable alike as athlete and antiquary, who knows his Norfolk probably better than any man living, in an admirable brochure on "Coke of Norfolk," suggests another reason for Mr. Coke's determination to take the management of his farms into his own hands. He had engaged as "auditor-general" of his estates one Major Richard Gardiner, a rather remarkable adventurer who had been in turn privateersman, parson, successful preacher, and soldier. In the last-named capacity he had distinguished himself at the capture of Martinique, in the West Indies Expedition of 1759, and had written a narrative of that expedition which rapidly ran through three editions, and was translated into French. In 1773 Gardiner retired from the army on half-pay with the rank of major, and for some time earned a more or less precarious livelihood by writing prologues and epilogues to plays, political pamphlets, and satires in verse. He had a knack of turning off election squibs, and when he offered his services to Coke of Holkham, with whose father he had been on friendly terms, as "auditor-general" of his estates at a salary of £600 a year, it was an understood thing that his pen should be at the service of his patron in his electioneering campaigns. Major Gardiner appears, in fact, to have been a sort of literary Chevalier Strong, and he regarded Mr. Coke in the same light in which that jolly major-domo regarded Sir Francis Clavering.

The place was intended as a sinecure, but Gardiner recklessly altered existing relations, increased rents, drove out tenants, and even endeavoured to choose the guests and order the dinners of his employer. This, it must be remembered, is Gardiner's own account of his proceedings as given in his Autobiography under the pseudonym of "Dick Merryfellow," and it may be a sarcastic exaggeration of the reasons alleged by Coke for dismissing him, after six months' trial, with a gratuity of £200.

Dismissed at any rate he was, and, as he alleged, at the instigation of Sir Henry Harbord, to whom he addressed a long letter full of vituperation. Sir Henry and Coke answered with indignant denials of Gardiner's assertions, and there was a fierce paper war between them. When the next election came on Gardiner avenged himself by lampooning Coke as "Sir Growl" and "Prince Pinery," holding him up to ridicule for his lack of brains, "his baby face and simpering smile," and to execration for his meanness and selfishness, declaring that he thought of nothing but himself and his sport, that the "broken meats" which had once been given to the poor were now bestowed upon his hounds, and that he was barbaric in his merciless severity to everyone guilty of even the slightest transgression of the Game Laws. I think most of the disparaging stories of Coke may be traced to the venomous pen of Major Richard Gardiner.

Possibly, then, Thomas William Coke was influenced by his unfortunate experiences of an "auditor-general" to take up farming on his own account, and was perhaps piqued, by Gardiner's assertion that he was not fit to have the control of his own estates, into showing the

world that he had more in him than most people thought. He knew very little of farming, but he had plenty of good common sense, a clear head, and a quick brain. He wisely took counsel with practical farmers, among them his young friend Francis, Duke of Bedford, who was already making his mark as an agriculturist.

In the year 1778 at shearing-time he invited a number of farmers from neighbouring districts to come and examine his Park Farm and discuss with him its management. And so originated the famous "Holkham Shearings," or "Coke's Clippings," as Norfolk men dubbed them, which were continued annually for more than forty years, and were ranked amongst the most important agricultural meetings in the kingdom.

For three days every July Mr. Coke kept open house at Holkham. The mornings were passed in inspecting the farms, the produce, the new machinery, the cattle, and sheep, and all the latest improvements in husbandry; the afternoons in watching ploughing and shearing matches and distributing prizes to successful competitors.

With "Coke of Norfolk" on horseback at their head, hundreds of agricultural enthusiasts rode or drove over the different portions of the vast estate—44,000 acres within a ring fence; and when the day's excursion was over, six hundred guests would sit down in the noble statue-gallery to enjoy the host's magnificent hospitality.

The secret of Mr. Coke's success in cultivating his Holkham estates lay in high manuring, constant marling, and dressing with rape seed. It was part of his system, too, to stock his farms heavily, but, as he said, "more

for the manure than the meat." Devons and Southdowns were the breeds he favoured in cattle and sheep. During the sixty-six years of his reign at Holkham he spent £536,992 in building and repairs, besides the cost of planting the woods, which are now the great beauty of the park. The annual fall of timber brought him in £2,700, which was considerably more than the whole rental of the estates when he first succeeded to them. In commemoration of his great achievements as an agriculturist an imposing monument was erected in the park by public subscription. It was commenced in 1845 and completed in 1848, six years after his death. The subscribers were nine hundred in number, and the amount subscribed was £4,995 11s. 6d., including donations from five shillings to fifty pounds. The monument consists of a fluted column surmounted by a wheatsheaf, and rising to a height of 125 feet. The pedestal is embellished with three bas-reliefs representing the sheep-shearing, granting a lease, and irrigation, all containing portraits of noted agriculturists, whilst the fourth side is occupied by an elaborate inscription setting forth the many claims of Thomas William Coke upon the respect and admiration of his countrymen. At each corner of the pedestal is a symbolic figure—a Devon ox, a Southdown sheep, a plough, and a drill, with appropriate mottos beneath.

So much for "Coke of Norfolk" as an agriculturist, the character in which no doubt he has the largest claim to fame. Let me now look at him in his character as sportsman.

Coke was without doubt the best game-shot of his

day. It is recorded in the Holkham Game Book that he once for a wager killed 82 partridges in 84 shots. This has been ridiculed by some writers as an impossible feat. When, however, one remembers that George Osbaldeston once killed 98 pheasants in 100 shots, and that Colonel Hawker and John Holt performed almost equally remarkable feats, one hesitates to dispute the truth of the Holkham legend. But, putting this phenomenal performance on one side, here are some undisputed records of Mr. Coke's shooting. On October 7th, 1797, within an area of one mile of his manor at Warham, he bagged 40 brace of birds in 90 shots, each bird killed singly. On the previous day over the same ground he had bagged 22½ brace in three hours, so that birds must have been pretty numerous even then.

In those days partridges were far more plentiful than pheasants and ground-game than either. For example, it is recorded in the Holkham Game Book for 1810 that in four days 2,032 head of game were killed, of which 1,012 were rabbits and 761 hares. In 1800, out of a total of 5,201 head of game shot at Holkham, only 355 were pheasants, whilst the partridges numbered 3,805 and the hares 854. Ten years later the number of pheasants killed showed a remarkable increase, for out of 10,599 head of game shot, 1,227 were pheasants, 1,711 partridges, 3,176 hares, and 3,789 rabbits, the ground-game, it will be noticed, still largely predominating.

Contrast this with the result of five days' pheasant-shooting at Holkham in 1885, when 2,592 head of pheasants fell to eight guns in four consecutive days,

and it will be apparent what tremendous strides have been made in pheasant-shooting and pheasant-preserving.

Lord Albemarle gives a graphic picture of the sport at Holkham in the 'Thirties. He writes:

"Early in November I accompanied the Duke of Sussex to Holkham. For three successive months Mr. Coke kept open house for his friends. Among his annual guests were Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, afterwards King of the Belgians, and the Duke of Gloucester. These princes desired to be considered as private friends, and dispensed with the attentions that etiquette usually assigns to persons in their station of life. The *battues* began the first Wednesday of November, and continued twice a week for the rest of the season. The quantity of game killed in the three months was probably not much more than it is now the fashion to slaughter in as many days; but the flint-and-steel guns were always fully employed, and everybody was satisfied with his day's sport. The *non-battue* days were passed, either in the turnip fields among the partridges, or in the salt marshes in pursuit of snipes and wild fowl.

In a shooting establishment like Holkham, game-keepers are persons of importance. Several of these were characters in their way. There was old Joe Hibbert, who had been a prize-fighter in his youth. On one occasion, Sir John Shelley, who was celebrated for his neat sparring, challenged Hibbert to a set-to with the gloves, and some of the young men mischievously promised Joe a good tip if he would ad-

minister a little punishment to Sir John. Joe put on the gloves, but soon drew them off again ; and turning round upon his backers, exclaimed, ' Not for twice the money would I strike a gentleman ! '

One of Joe's colleagues, but of a different sex, was Polly Fishbourne, keeper of the Church Lodge, who when I last heard of her was still alive. She must be about my own age. She had large, black eyes, red cheeks, and white teeth ; her hair was cropped like a man's, and she wore a man's hat. The rest of her attire was feminine. She was irreproachable in character, and, indeed, somewhat of a prude. Polly was the terror of poachers, with whom she had frequent encounters, and would give and take hard knocks ; but generally succeeded in capturing her opponents and making them answer for their misdeeds at Petty Sessions.

A Norfolk game-preserve once offered Polly a shilling a-piece for a hundred pheasants' eggs. She nodded her head. Soon after she brought Mr. Coke a five-pound note. ' There, Squire,' said she, ' is the price of a hundred of your guinea-fowl eggs.' Of course the Squire made Polly keep the five-pound note.

One time that I was staying at Holkham, a bull killed a labouring man in the salt marshes. The savage brute was standing over his victim, and a crowd was assembled at the gate, when Polly appeared at the opposite side. There was a cry, ' Get out of the way, Polly, or the bull will kill you.' ' Not he,' was the reply ; ' he knows better.' She was right. The moment he saw her he backed astern to the remotest corner of the enclosure.

It turned out that the animal had once attempted to run at her, but she had lodged a charge of small shot in his muzzle.

Two young gentlemen once paid a visit to Holkham in the summer time. The dinner hour was half-past three, but the guests were not forthcoming. It was eight in the evening before they put in an appearance, and then looked uncommonly sheepish. At daybreak they decamped without beat of drum. It transpired that they had expressed a wish to see the church, and applied to Polly, the keeper of the Church Lodge. On their way thither one of them attempted to rob the said keeper of a kiss. Luckily for them they were guests at the hall, or she would have treated them as she used to treat the poachers. She resorted to a milder punishment; while they were in the belfry admiring the scenery, Polly turned the Church key upon them."

Another remarkable gamekeeper at Holkham, of the other sex, was John Hawkesworth, of whose eccentricities the Rev. William Barker Daniel gives the following account :

"Hawkesworth never associated with, or spoke to any person unless he was first addressed. He was very penurious, and had accumulated a considerable fortune, which he had hid from the fear of invasion, and his death, at the age of seventy, was supposed to be occasioned by depriving himself of sufficient nourishment. Mr. Coke annually furnished him with sufficient clothing, but his dress was of the most miserable kind, and he always wore an old painted hat, patched over with pieces of cloth. The liveries he had by him at the



PHEASANT-SHOOTING—OLD STYLE.

From a painting by Abraham Cooper, R.A.

time of his decease, and which had never been worn, were estimated to be worth one hundred pounds. Amongst the neighbours he was known by the title of the 'Walking Obelisk.'"

But among the shooting records of Holkham, the feat which will be longest remembered is that of Sir Francis Chantrey, the great sculptor, who killed two woodcocks in a single shot. Chantrey, like Sir Humphry Davy, was an enthusiastic sportsman both with rod and gun; in fact, he was an enthusiast at whatever he took up. It was his boast that he had mowed an acre of grass in a day, thrashed a quarter of corn (with a flail, be it understood), and ploughed an acre of land in the same space of time. For he held that a man should be able to do with his own hand *everything* that "tended to the duties, the necessities, and the conveniences of life."

Chantrey was the president of that jovial coterie of Waltonians, the Houghton Fishing Club, and was the life and soul of its convivial meetings. But with all his intense love of sport he combined a peculiarly sensitive nature. He could not bear to see any creature in suffering, and he always carried in his pocket an ivory rule, with which he killed every fish he caught the instant he had landed it. So squeamish was he on this point that once, when thirty pheasants and twenty hares were placed at his feet by the keepers as his share of a day's shooting at Holkham, he felt so sick that he had to turn hastily away.

He was a frequent guest at Holkham during the shooting season, and the following is the official account of his memorable feat in woodcock-shooting, as given

218 **Kings of the Rod, Rifle, and Gun**

by Mr. James P. Muirhead, who had the particulars from Mr. Spencer Stanhope, one of the witnesses of the sculptor's exploit, which, of course, was a mere fluke and no proof of exceptional skill :

“QUARLES NEW PLANTATION.

Amidst the events of the day it is especially worthy of being recorded that Mr. Chantrey killed *at one shot Two Woodcocks* ; and, considering this exploit as among the many illustrious achievements, if not the most extraordinary, of that great and extraordinary man, it was unanimously proposed to Mr. Coke that the spot should be henceforth handed [down] to posterity, and the honours of the individual perpetuated, by the name of Chantrey Hill being given to it ; assured that no sculptor in Europe had ever done before so much in the art of Shooting, [Mr. Chantrey] having but the day before killed at one shot a hare and a rabbit.

Testified by { THOMAS WILL^{MS} COKE.
ARCHDEACON GLOVER.
J. SPENCER STANHOPE.

Mr. Stanhope has also been good enough to furnish us with the following particulars of the occurrence, as it first became known to him, and gave occasion to his lines on ‘the joyous Chantrey.’ By those who knew the *personnel* of the Sculptor, and in what manner of guise he was wont to be ‘got up’ for a regular day’s sport among the bushes, the ‘joyous countenance’ and the Peruvian hat will both be recognised as very graphic features in the scene depicted. Writing to his friend

Mr. Collyer, Mr. Stanhope says: 'Perhaps you would like to have my recollections of the day. Chantrey was placed in the gravel-pit that you will remember just under the Hall. I was standing next to him, but hid from him by the bank formed by the pit. Knowing how keen a sportsman he was, I was amazed at seeing him running up to me without his gun, just at the moment when the hares were passing us in all directions; but when I saw him waving his Peruvian hat over his head, and distinguished his joyous countenance, I knew that all was right. "TWO COCKS AT ONE SHOT!" burst from him, and announced to me the feat that he had performed.'

This triumph was, as may be imagined, hailed by the assembled sportsmen with wonder and applause: and on its announcement, Mr. Coke, himself an enthusiastic lover of the chase in all its forms, marshalled the whole party,—'guns,' keepers, and beaters,—in line; he then made Chantrey pass along the ranks; and, as he passed, each individual in succession uncovered and made a formal obeisance to the Hero of the Day.

The difficulty of Chantrey's exploit seems to increase when it is known that he had the use of only one eye, which was the left one. 'All of a sudden,' says a recent writer, 'on some subject connected with blindness being glanced at, he [Chantrey] turned to me a pair of very agreeable deep-grey eyes, and said, "Do you know, sir, I was born, it is supposed, blind of one eye, and it was never discovered till I was ten years old? . . . Now, can you," he said, turning a somewhat handsome countenance

upon me, "tell which of my eyes is blind? Do guess which it is!" I looked up into his face. There was an expression of thought and mild good sense in both eyes. They were both clear, and free from any apparent disease or weakness. They were searching without being staring. I could at first see no difference; but, after looking earnestly for some time, I noticed in one a tiny speck, or rather discolourment, on the pupil,—so slight that I do not believe any one could have observed it [without the closest inspection]. "That," I whispered, "is the—the defective eye." "No, sir, it is not merely defective; it is blind: but I do not let my sitters know it."

The gun of Chantrey, which was adapted to his peculiarity of sight, was thus, like the bow of Ulysses, a weapon which no one but its rightful lord was able to use with ease; but in his hands it was all-powerful; and on this occasion certainly caused, although in a different sense from that intended by the old chronicler, a memorable '*fall of woodcocks*.'

The two woodcocks were exquisitely chiselled in marble by the sculptor, and this beautiful specimen of Chantrey's finest workmanship occupies a conspicuous place in the library at Holkham. All the wits of England were requested to exercise their ingenuity in furnishing an epigram to form an appropriate inscription for the group. The contributions were so numerous, and it was so difficult to decide which was the best, that none of them was used, but a simple inscription narrating the facts was placed below the tablet. The epigrams, however, have been collected in

a pretty volume by Mr. J. P. Muirhead under the title of "Winged Words." I subjoin one or two examples of these *jeux d'esprit*, 179 in number, but none of them, to my thinking, very happy efforts.

The best, I think, is that by the late and great Bishop of Oxford :

Life in death, a mystic lot,
Dealt thou to the winged band ;
Death from thine unerring shot,
Life from thine undying hand.

Lord Jeffery contributed several, but none better than this :

Their good and ill from the same source they drew,—
Here shrin'd in marble by the hand that slew.

Mr. Hudson Gurney's contribution deals with the subject in lighter vein :

Driven from the North that would have starv'd them,
This was the way that Chantrey *sarv'd* them,
He shot them first and then he *carv'd* them.

Chantrey's feat, I may add, was rivalled by Colonel Sands, who on November 4th, 1853, killed two woodcock with one barrel ; and the same sportsman is credited with bagging four blackcock at a single shot.

In the February of 1822, when he was sixty-eight years of age and had been for twenty-one years a widower, Mr. Coke astonished his friends by marrying for the second time. And what was still more astonishing was that the bride was his god-daughter, a girl of eighteen !—Anne Amelia, third daughter of the Earl of Albemarle. She was not born till three years after

the death of Coke's first wife, and was seven years younger than her husband's *granddaughter* the Countess of Rosebery. The reasons for this strange marriage were as follows.

By his first wife, who died in 1800, Mr. Coke had no male issue—only three daughters. Consequently the heir-presumptive to his estates was his nephew William Coke, whose exploits as a sportsman I have recounted in my sketches of Captain Ross and Lord Kennedy. For reasons which were never made public, Mr. Coke and his nephew had a serious quarrel, and the uncle, in his wrath, resolved to marry again and provide himself with an heir in the direct line. His hopes were realised—the second Mrs. Coke bore her venerable but vigorous husband five sons and a daughter. The eldest of those sons is the present Earl of Leicester. For “Coke of Norfolk,” after thrice refusing a peerage and priding himself, like James Fox Lane, on being the First Commoner in England, yielded at last, in his eighty-third year, to the seductive voice of Lord Melbourne, and consented to accept a title, providing it was that borne by his grand-uncle—namely, Earl of Leicester and Viscount Coke of Holkham. His wishes were complied with, and Thomas William Coke was the first commoner on whom Queen Victoria conferred a patent of nobility.

But it was as “Coke of Norfolk” that he was known till his death, and it is as “Coke of Norfolk” that his fame will go down to posterity. To the very end of his long life Lord Leicester retained his physical vigour and his love of shooting. One of the last

glimpses we have of him as a sportsman is that given by Mr. W. Spencer Stanhope, of Cannon Hall, Barnsley, in a letter to Lord Walsingham quoted by the latter in the Badminton volume on "Field and Covert Shooting." Mr. Stanhope, referring to grouse-driving, which he says was first commenced by his father's keeper George Fisher about 1805, writes :

"The first drive I can recollect being present at was in 1836, when the late Lord Leicester was at the Boadhill drive, then aged eighty-three ; and old Sir William Cooke, of Wheatley, was there with a flint gun, and he brought down an old cock that had come down the length of the line and had been shot at by everybody ; he took off his white hat and called out, ' There's your copper caps, gentlemen ! ' "

Six years later, on June 30th, 1842, Thomas William Coke, Earl of Leicester, died at Longford Hall, his Derbyshire seat, having reached the patriarchal age of eighty-nine, and he lies buried beside his first wife in the family vault in the little Norfolk church of Tittleshall.

There were one or two traits in the character of "Coke of Norfolk" to which I may refer before taking my leave of him. Although one of the best whist-players in England, he abhorred gambling in every shape ; and, fond as he was of horses, he detested racing. His advice to his son was, "Tom, when you go through Newmarket draw down the blinds ; never look at the place." This, of course, was in the good old days of post-chaises and travelling "chariots."

His political enemies accused him of being coarse and violent in his language, vehement and intemperate

in the expression of his opinions, and tyrannical to his labourers. It was said that he compelled every labourer on his estates to attend the parish church on Sunday mornings, and then made them work for the rest of the day to keep them from the ale-house. Radicals, too, declared that his administration of the Game Laws was harsh and arbitrary. So far as I can gather there was very slight ground for these allegations. But Thomas William Coke did not care much what his enemies said. Honest, fearless, and hot-tempered, he despised them. On one occasion, when at a political meeting he had made a fierce attack upon a neighbouring baronet, a friend said to him, "You have made that man an enemy for life." "And what was he before?" retorted Coke. "I tell you what, my father called me to him when I was a boy, and said, 'Tom, stick to your friends and disregard your enemies.' I *have* done so, and I *will* do so to the end of my life."

What his neighbours and fellow-shiresmen thought of him may be gathered from the stately monument reared to his memory at Holkham. They would hardly have subscribed £5,000 to erect such a memorial if they had not been animated by a deep and sincere regard for the public services and the private worth of the man whom they thus signally honoured.

The present Earl of Leicester, now in his seventy-ninth year, is as energetic a landlord and as keen a sportsman as his father. Some of his shooting feats have been phenomenal. Fifty years ago, long before partridge-driving as we know it had come into fashion, he killed 137 brace of birds to his own gun in a single day's

shooting, and in *one morning*, on another occasion, accounted for 103 brace. How plentiful birds are on the Holkham estates may be gathered from the following records of four days' shooting by eight guns: December 8th, 1885, 856 head of partridges; December 9th, 885; December 10th, 678; December 11th, 973,—a total of 3,392 killed in four consecutive days. Contrast this with the old days. In the eight years from 1793 to 1800 the highest bag of partridges in a single year was 3,965 in 1798; the annual average was under 3,000. That is to say, in 1885 Lord Leicester with seven other guns killed more partridges in four days than his father and his friends killed in a whole shooting season!

But I find better evidence of the present Lord Leicester's prowess with the gun in his records of wild-fowl shooting. Holkham is famous for its wild-fowl, and thousands of widgeon may often be seen in hard winter weather on the great lake, where, however, they are never disturbed, for that is their sanctuary. Elsewhere they must take their chance.

On December 12th, 1862, there fell to Lord Leicester's own gun 73 ducks, 36 teal, and 2 widgeon, total 111; on February 28th, 1866, he bagged 1 snipe, 71 ducks, 24 teal, 2 widgeon, total 98; on February 12th he shot 64 ducks, 20 teal, 6 wild geese, and 2 Canada geese, total 92. On January 13th and 26th, 1881, Lord Leicester and the Hon. Colonel Coke between them killed 76 wild geese, all with *shoulder-guns*, a feat which I suppose it would be impossible to achieve anywhere else in England, except at Berkeley Castle, for nowhere else can the shoulder-shot get such chances at wild geese.

But even more remarkable, perhaps, have been Lord Leicester's achievements in snipe-shooting. In a single day he has killed to his own gun *eighty couple* of snipe! And on the day following that prodigious bag he and his keeper shot 78 couple.

I have already referred to the great pheasant-shoots at Holkham, where Lord Leicester offers superb sport to his guests, amongst whom are always some of the finest shots in England; and a sportsman can have no higher tribute to his skill than to be named for the "outer ring" at Holkham, to stop those "rocketers" which tax all the quickness of hand and eye of even the deadliest shooters.

There is not in the United Kingdom a spot on which I should feel more disposed to bestow the title of "The Sportsman's Paradise" than Holkham, and there is no sportsman better fitted to be the owner of such a "Paradise" than Thomas William Coke, second Earl of Leicester.

Lord Kennedy

AMONG the wild band of madcap sportsmen who "made things hum" during the first three decades of the nineteenth century there was no bolder spirit and no more brilliant Nimrod than Archibald Kennedy, Earl of Cassillis, better known to fame as Lord Kennedy. If you run your eye through the "*Noctes Ambrosianæ*," you will find that whenever Christopher North wishes to describe the *ne plus ultra* of skill with the gun, it is Lord Kennedy that he takes as his exemplar; and there were certainly few men of his day who were his equals as a game- or pigeon-shot, and only two who were his superiors—the great Twin Brethren of Sport, Horatio Ross and George Osbaldeston.

The Kennedys, Earls of Cassillis and now Marquises of Ailsa, are a fine old Scottish family who began to make their mark in Scotland's history as far back as the commencement of the thirteenth century. Most of them were warriors, but there were some who wore the mitre of bishop and abbot. Gilbert, the first Lord Kennedy, received his patent of nobility in 1456. His son David, first Earl of Cassillis, fell on Flodden's fatal field.

Gilbert, the fourth Earl, was Privy Councillor to Mary Stuart, and was involved in the ruin which overwhelmed her fortunes at Langside. His successor in the title has been made famous by ballad and tradition as the grim husband who locked up his Countess in Maybole Tower, and kept her there till she died. But even the veriest stickler for romance must admit that he had just cause for this severity. The lady was married against her will—no uncommon thing in those days—and her heart had been given long before to the famous King of the Gypsies, Johnny Faa, of Yetholm, "Lord and Erle of Little Egypt," whom a living romancer has introduced into one of the most popular of his novels. When the Earl of Cassillis was away, the bold Johnny took advantage of his absence to make a raid on his castle and carry off his Countess, "she being nothing loth." But the grim Earl, on his return, at once gave chase to the abductor, caught him up, killed him and all his followers, save one, after a bloody fight, and recaptured the abducted lady. He built a tower at Maybole, in Ayrshire, and when it was finished he took his faithless wife there and shut her up for the rest of her life. But she had her revenge in a way, for she spent her long, lonely hours of imprisonment in working out on tapestry the pictured story of her love adventures with Johnny Faa, whilst the Lowland balladist has also perpetuated the tale in verse. Against such "eternal blazon" what avail the indignant protests of the "family" and appeals to the fact that no documentary evidence of any such romantic episode exists in the archives of the Kennedys?



PARTRIDGE-SHOOTING - OLD STYLE.

That the Kennedys were also a race of sportsmen one may gather from correspondence still preserved in the family archives. In 1693 I find Sir Archibald Kennedy, a great shooter of wild-fowl, sending presents of solan geese to James, Earl of Perth, and George, Duke of Gordon, and others, whose letters thanking him heartily for "the rarity" are extant. A noble sportsman would hardly think nowadays of sending solan geese to his friends, and if he did the recipients of the present would hardly thank him for "the rarity." Doubtless by men besieged, say at Ladysmith or Mafeking, a solan goose might be deemed a delicacy, but under no other circumstances can I conceive anyone looking on the bird in its cooked state without a shudder.

They were noted breeders, too, both of hawks and sporting dogs, these Kennedys. Here is a curious letter from Alexander, Lord Montgomerie, of Eglintoun, thanking Sir Archibald Kennedy for the present of "a setter dog." The letter is dated June 25th, 1698 :

"I am much oblidged to you for the dog you have sent me, setting being the onlay sport I am like to have the next seson ; but you writt the doge is out, and your man tells me Murdochs in your countrie ; besids my wife likes mour-foull, and I would take ane day or tuos sport or I goe to Edinburgh, all which has made me return this doge, and sent my fout man along for the other you writt of. I hope you will excuse this fredom."

The spelling is eccentric and the grammar obscure, but apparently Lord Montgomerie's meaning is that Sir Archibald Kennedy had previously promised him another dog of Murdoch's breed, and that he prefers

that dog to the one which he had received. To coolly send back one dog, however, sent as a present, and ask for another, would certainly be deemed a "freedom" not easily excusable in these days. But the noblemen of that period were in the habit of taking even ruder "freedom."

From such good old sporting stock, then, came Archibald, Lord Kennedy, who was born on June 4th, 1794, at Cassillis House, in the shire of Ayr. His great-grandfather had been Receiver-General at New York, where he married as his first wife Miss Elizabeth Massam, of that city.

His grandfather was a captain in the Royal Navy, who greatly distinguished himself in many brilliant actions, particularly in one off Lisbon, in commemoration of which the merchants of that city presented him with a handsome piece of plate. He succeeded to his father's estate of Pavonia, in the State of New York, and during the War of Independence his house was burned and all his papers destroyed. He married as his first wife a Miss Schayler, of New Jersey, a lady of large fortune, by whom he had no issue. His second wife was also an American lady, Anne, daughter of John Watts, of New York, and she bore him four children, the eldest of whom became twelfth Earl of Cassillis, and was the father of Lord Kennedy, the subject of my sketch.

It will be noted how largely the Kennedys introduced American blood into the family, and I think they were the first noble house in Great Britain to enrich themselves by alliances with American heiresses.

The family estates, all in Ayrshire, comprised 76,000

acres, producing a rental of £36,000. To these Lord Kennedy, as the eldest son of the Earl of Cassillis, was heir; but he never came into his inheritance, for he died before his father.

By his marriage with the rich heiress Miss Allardice, however, Lord Kennedy became possessor of the beautiful estate of Dunottur, near Stonehaven, in Kincardineshire, with a rent-roll of something like £10,000 a year, and not far short of £100,000 in ready money. Unfortunately, this large property was not strictly settled on Lady Kennedy, and her husband was able to get hold of it and play ducks and drakes with it, as he did also with some £5,000 per annum which came to him through his mother. At every race meeting from North to South Lord Kennedy was a regular attendant, and both in the ring and at the hazard-table he gambled in a style that one can only call insane.

When the new Subscription Rooms were opened at Doncaster, and superseded the long, narrow, upper apartment at the Salutation, which was the betting mart previously to the year 1826, Lord Kennedy was the mightiest hero over their Board of Green Cloth. The story is still told there how one evening it was as much as the friend at his side could do to stuff the bank-notes into his lordship's pockets, as he won eight mains at hazard in succession; and when the emulous ardour of the spectators almost foamed into frenzy, a man near the table sold his seat for five guineas!

But it is in connection with his mania for making matches and betting frantically upon them that Lord Kennedy is principally celebrated. In 1823 he backed

himself against Mr. William Coke for 200 sovereigns a side to shoot more partridges in two days in Scotland than his opponent in the same time in Norfolk. The match caused considerable excitement, and large sums were wagered on the event. September 26th and October 4th were the days selected. Mr. Coke shot over the manor at Holkham, the property of his uncle, the famous "Coke of Norfolk." Lord Kennedy chose Monreith, the seat of Sir William Maxwell, in Wigtownshire, famous then for its game-preserves. The result of the match was that Mr. Coke killed $80\frac{1}{2}$ brace the first day, and $87\frac{1}{2}$ brace the second—total, 168 brace; whilst Lord Kennedy shot 50 brace the first day, and 82 the second—total, 132 brace. Some 20,000 guineas changed hands over the issue, of which a large share came out of Lord Kennedy's pocket, for he had, as usual, backed himself heavily. His lordship was undoubtedly the better shot of the two, but he was so wilful, obstinate, and quick-tempered that he would not take the advice of those who knew the ground over which he was shooting better than he did, and so he lost. Sir William Maxwell was very indignant with anyone who suggested that Lord Kennedy's defeat was owing to the far greater number of birds at Holkham than at Monreith; but when I say that the young Norfolk squire killed $35\frac{1}{2}$ brace in a single twenty-acre patch of swedes, I think it will be apparent that Mr. Coke had the pull in that respect.

Another great match of Lord Kennedy's was against Mr. Arrowsmith for 600 guineas, at 100 pigeons each, 30 yards rise. Fortunately for his lordship, who had

£2,000 depending on the result, Mr. Arrowsmith's last bird fell dead just *two yards outside* the boundary, and the match ended in a tie, each having killed 76. This was at the grounds of the famous Red House Club at Battersea, which in those days vied with the equally celebrated Old Hats Club at Ealing as the *ne plus ultra* of aristocratic pigeon-shooting.

In the month of June, 1827, Lord Kennedy shot his great match against "Squire" Osbaldeston for 2,000 guineas a side, the terms of which were 100 birds each day for four days at 24 yards rise. The "Squire" won by 19 birds; and how good the shooting was may be gathered from the fact that out of the last hundred Lord Kennedy killed 83 and the "Squire" 86. Indeed, with all our modern improvements in gun-making, I doubt whether we have two English pigeon-shots now living who could beat the best records of such cracks as the "Squire" and Captain Ross. The former is credited with 98 out of 100 at 30 yards rise, and the latter with 76 out of 80 at the same distance, and 52 out of 53 at 35 yards rise. Mr. Stuart Wortley, indeed, thinks the birds were inferior to those now supplied, but gives no proof in support of that theory.

With regard to Lord Kennedy's match with the "Squire," the following anecdote will show that his lordship was a "downy cove," up to a trick or two that even the modern shootist would find it hard to improve upon. During the match Lord Kennedy killed twenty-five pigeons consecutively, and Mr. Budd, the celebrated cricketer and all-round sportsman, who was present,

observed that though the birds fell and were reckoned dead, each one began running about the ground cooing. "What the deuce are you up to?" said Mr. Budd to his lordship, who replied, "Hold your tongue, you are an enemy." The wind shifted just then, and Lord Kennedy failed to stop four or five in succession. Then Mr. Budd "twigged" that the wily young nobleman was using dust-shot.

It is interesting to compare these exploits with the best performances of the present day. In pigeon-shooting Americans hold the record, and I will give some of their best shoots. On July 2nd, 1880, the well-known Captain Bogardus killed 99 birds out of 100 at 30 yards rise, shooting against an Englishman named Rimmell, to whom he conceded two yards. In reality Bogardus killed *all* his birds, for the forty-seventh fell dead just outside the bounds. In November, 1891, at New York, Mr. E. D. Fulford and Captain Brewer shot a two days' match, at 100 pigeons each day, 30 yards rise. On the first day Fulford killed *all* his birds, and Brewer killed 99. On the second day Fulford killed 99 to Brewer's 98. In a subsequent three days' match with Mr. Elliott, at the New Jersey Gun Club, Captain Brewer won with the following remarkable score. On the first day they tied at 93. On shooting off Brewer killed 23 out of 25 to his opponent's 21. On the second day Brewer scored 99 to Elliott's 92, killing 69 straight off the reel, and the seventieth fell dead just out of bounds. On the third day Brewer killed 93 to Elliott's 89. The winner, therefore, in the three days killed 308 out of 325. Since then Captain Brewer has killed 105 birds in succession without

a miss. In this country we can show no such records. I may be mistaken, but I do not remember that any score of 90 out of 100 birds has ever been made in a public match in England.

I have already said that Lord Kennedy's temper was none of the best. He could not take a defeat in good part, but brooded over it, and never rested till he had devised some scheme of revenge. On one occasion he had taken long odds to a large amount on winning three events. He won the first two. The third was a match at pigeons against Captain Ross, which he lost. His lordship was much annoyed, and somewhat unguardedly spoke of his determination "to go at Ross in every way, until he had not left him so much as a pewter pot." The Captain was to be one of a party, which included Lord Kennedy, who were to drive to the Derby together ; and before starting the former received a hint to be wide awake and prepared for all sorts of wild proposals from his lordship. They had not got well off the stones before Lord Kennedy opened fire. First he attacked Captain Ross about his riding, and offered to back a gentleman who hunted in Scotland (Captain Douglas) to ride a match against Ross, four miles over Leicestershire, for £1,000 a side. Captain Ross accepted the bet ; and before the day was over Lord Kennedy had not only wagered a further £2,000 to £1,000 with the Captain on the event, but had made a cocking match with him to fight a main for £1,000, and £100 a battle.

The steeplechase came off first, the course being from Barkley Holt to Billesdon Coplow, and excited a great

deal of interest, sportsmen coming from all parts of the kingdom to witness it. Lord Kennedy went to enormous expense in purchasing horses for the match. At last he fixed on Tom Smith's famous horse Radical, for which he paid 400 guineas—a splendid animal, but rather difficult to ride. Captain Ross, who was exceedingly popular, had no need to buy a horse, for no less than 300 hunters were placed at his disposal by his numerous hunting friends. After a good many trials, Mr. Francis Holyoake's celebrated horse Clinker was selected. The night before the race Lord Kennedy wrote to Captain Ross, stating that he wished very much to see him and come to an understanding about a very important point connected with next day's race. They met accordingly, and his lordship said that as such an enormous sum was pending on the match, both between themselves and others, he thought it advisable that they should start with as few openings for a wrangle as possible; that in a flat race crossing or jostling was not allowed, but that on the morrow he thought it best that the riders should do just as they pleased. "In short," said Captain Ross "I understand we may ride over each other, and kill one another if we can. Is it so?" "Just so," replied his lordship. What followed I will let the Captain describe in his own words :

"Oddly enough, the first jump was a five-barred gate. I lay with Clinker's head just opposite Douglas's knee. When within forty or fifty yards of the gate I saw clearly that Radical meant to refuse it; so, recollecting my last night's bargain, I held Clinker well in hand. Radical, as I expected, when close

to the gate, turned right across Clinker. I struck the spurs in, knocked Douglas over the gate, and sent Radical heels over head, and lying on this side of it. Douglas did not lose his horse; his snaffle rein was fastened to his wrist, and he was soon back again and mounted—but it finished the match effectually. I turned round, jumped the corner of the fence, and gained such a lead that he never got near me again. I suppose in these shop-keeping days killing a man in that way would be 'wilful murder.' Not so in 1826; the verdict would have been 'justifiable homicide.'"

Lord Kennedy dropped £9,000 over that match, and the week after lost the cocking match as well; for Doctor Wing, of Melton, who was almost as famous a cocker as old Dr. Bellyse, of Audlem, placed all his splendid birds at the Captain's disposal; and as the main was fought in Leicestershire, Ross had the incalculable advantage of having his birds on the scene of action, whilst Lord Kennedy's had to stand the wear and tear of a journey from Scotland. Poor Lord Kennedy's mortification was complete, and his attempted revenge upon Captain Ross cost him close upon £15,000.

One of the rashest bets Lord Kennedy ever made was after a defeat by Captain Ross in a pigeon match. In a moment of petulance he said he would bet anyone £100 to £1 that he never shot another pigeon as long as he lived. Mr. E. H. Budd promptly took the bet, and booked it in the presence of the "Squire" and some other friends. Some time afterwards his lordship was complaining of the prevailing slowness and dulness in the sporting world, and expressing a wish that some-

body would set the ball rolling again. Captain Grant, who was present, at once offered to back Mr. Budd against his lordship at pigeons for £50. Lord Kennedy accepted the bet, and was beaten. When he paid Grant the £50, Mr. Budd reminded him of the other bet, but Lord Kennedy denied that he had ever made it. Though witnesses proved the fact, he still refused to pay, but at length agreed to refer it to the Jockey Club, who decided that if his lordship was such a fool as to make the bet he must abide by it, and that when any man again did so, he ought to name it in his will, as the person who took the odds could not lose during the life of him who made the bet. Lord Kennedy was very sore about the matter, but he eventually sent the money to Mr. Budd by Captain Ross.

Two great feats of Lord Kennedy's I must not omit. One night, when a large party of sportsmen were assembled at Black Hall, in Kincardineshire, then the seat of Mr. Farquharson, Sir Andrew Leith Hay bet Lord Kennedy £2,500 that he would get to Inverness on foot before him. Off they started at nine o'clock at night in their evening costume, with thin shoes and silk stockings. Sir Andrew Leith Hay went by the coach road, *via* Huntley and Elgin. Lord Kennedy, with Captain Ross as umpire, struck straight across the Grampians. Amid pouring rain they walked all night, next day, and the next night, reaching Inverness at 6 a.m. on the third day. Sir Andrew Leith Hay, who had chosen the longer, but far more comfortable route, did not arrive till four hours later. I think that, for its grotesque combination of madness, endurance,

and pluck, this feat stands unsurpassed in the annals of sport.

On another occasion Lord Kennedy backed himself for 1,000 guineas to shoot forty brace of grouse and ride from his shooting quarters at Feloar, in Perthshire, to his house, Dunottur, near Stonehaven, and back to Feloar in a day. He started very early, rain falling all the time. He killed forty brace by 9 a.m., changed his dress on the hill-side, and mounted a very clever hack, on which he rode the first seven or eight miles. There was no road for that distance ; but thence there was a tolerable road to Dunottur, along which he had relays of horses. From Feloar to Dunottur is about 80 miles. He got back to Feloar at 8 p.m., having shot 40 brace of grouse and ridden 160 miles in less than 15 hours, and was not in the least knocked up by it.

I may also mention here his famous golf match by night, which came off during the Montrose race week. At the race ordinary Lord Kennedy and Mr. Cruickshank, of Langley Park, got up a match of three holes for £500 each hole, and agreed to play it then and there. It was half-past ten, and quite dark. No light was allowed except one lantern placed on the hole, and another carried by the attendant of the player, that they might ascertain to whom the ball struck belonged. Boys were placed to listen to the flight of the balls, and run to the spot when a ball fell. Lord Kennedy won the odd hole, and curiously enough in the same number of strokes in which he usually did it by daylight.

Of Lord Kennedy's mad matches with Lord Kelburne,

afterwards Earl of Glasgow, notably their famous midnight coaching race for £500, in which both nearly lost their lives, I have told in "Kings of the Turf." With half a dozen bottles of claret under his belt there was no adventure, no feat of sporting or athletic prowess, too hare-brained and foolhardy for this wild Berserker spirit to undertake, and back himself for thousands, if need be, to accomplish. At game-shooting he was, as I have said, very hard to beat. Sir William Maxwell, of Monreith, himself, though one-armed, one of the best shots of his day, credits Lord Kennedy with having killed to his own gun over dogs in a single day 120 brace of partridges—a grand feat in those muzzle-loading days.

At the coronation of William IV. (one of whose daughters by Mrs. Jordan had married Lord Kennedy's younger brother) the Earl of Cassillis was created Marquis of Ailsa, and his eldest son assumed by courtesy the title of Earl of Cassillis. For a brief space the new earl was induced to devote himself to politics, and was elected member for Evesham. His father was a red-hot Liberal, who voted for the first Reform Bill; what Lord Kennedy's politics were, if he had any, I do not know. Probably he merely entered political life to oblige his father, who, no doubt, made this a condition of doling out further supplies to the reckless spendthrift.

But those who thought that Lord Kennedy as Earl of Cassillis had sown his wild oats and would settle down into a steady and sober life were grievously mistaken. He went the pace as fast as his crippled

resources would allow him. And his mad recklessness and hasty temper brought him prematurely to his end.

In the August of 1834 Lord Kennedy was in a precarious state of health and under strict medical treatment. He was expecting a visit from his doctor one day. The appointed hour came, but the doctor did not appear. His lordship was in an irritable mood. "I'm damned if I'll wait in for all doctors in the world if they don't keep time ; I'm off fishing," said he. And, taking his rod, he went salmon-fishing.

When the doctor arrived and heard what his patient had done, he exclaimed, "Then, if he's in the water he's a dead man."

His lordship *was* in the water—standing up to his middle in it, and thus, in defiance of the doctor, he continued to fish for several hours. The next day a chill struck him, and within a week he was dead.

It was one of "life's little ironies" that his death should have taken place on the morning of "The Twelfth," a day to which he always looked forward with intense eagerness ; and the grouse on the moors around Cassillis Castle were for the first time in their history allowed to rest undisturbed on their annual day of doom. Had they known that their deadliest foe had met with the fate to which he had consigned them by the score, how every cock would have crowed with vindictive triumph !

Lord Kennedy was only thirty-seven when he died, but he had already squandered his wife's fortune and his mother's, and dipped largely into his expectations as heir to the Marquis of Ailsa.

One hardly knows what verdict to pass upon such a career as Lord Kennedy's. If he was a mad and reckless gambler, he was also a keen and true sportsman. He was a spoiled child of fortune who had no command over his temper, and when that fiery temper was touched it stung him like a gadfly into the commission of acts which were nothing short of insane. Yet he was not vicious, and had many lovable qualities. "He was," says one who knew him well, "one of the most charming companions in the world when things were going all right, and his house was one of the pleasantest to visit I ever knew."

It was "of a strange order" that his eldest son, who became Marquis of Ailsa in 1846, on the death of his grandfather, should have met with a tragic end, due also, like his sire's, to his passion for sport. The Marquis was killed in the hunting-field on March 20th, 1870.

Captain Horatio Ross

"THERE were giants in the earth in those days"—that I think, no one will deny who is familiar with the sporting annals of the first three decades of the nineteenth century. For though in many respects the sportsmen of the twentieth century are far superior to their predecessors of eighty years ago, yet in all-round sport I defy them to produce such a trio of heroes as George Osbaldeston, Edward Hayward Budd, and Horatio Ross. There was no sport, except perhaps fishing, in which the first-named of the three did not excel. He was first-rate as a horseman, a Master of Hounds, a shot, a cricketer, a boxer, a swimmer, and a billiard-player. Budd as an athlete was unsurpassed. In boxing, running, jumping, cricket, he was *facile princeps*. His weight prohibited him from riding much, but he was as good a judge of a horse as any man in England. With the gun, whether at game or pigeons, he was in the very front rank. Ross was among the first steeplechasers of his day, and was a first flight man with hounds in the Shires when Melton Mowbray produced some of the hardest riders that ever galloped over the Leicestershire pastures,

His walking feats were even more remarkable than his exploits in the saddle ; whilst as a shot with gun, rifle, and pistol he was acknowledged to be the best man of his own day or perhaps of any other.

There are fortunately abundant materials for compiling a biographical sketch of Horatio Ross as a sportsman, for he supplied his old friend Mr. C. A. Wheeler, the author of "*Sportascrapiana*," with copious details of his various achievements, and I shall therefore let him tell his own story to a large extent.

He was the only son of Hercules Ross, of Rossie Castle, Forfarshire, an intimate friend of Nelson's, and the boy was named after the great Admiral, who was one of his godfathers. September 5th, 1801, was Horatio's natal day. It is a curious fact that Horatio Ross was as terrified when first introduced to firearms as the present Earl Spencer, "one of England's hardest riders," was when first mounted on a pony. The following amusing story is told of his terror. In the beginning of the last century, when the volunteers were first raised to oppose Napoleon's expected invasion, Horatio's father was colonel of a regiment raised on the Rossie and adjacent estates. When the regiment was about to receive a set of colours the Colonel was anxious that his little son, then six years of age, should present them. Everything went satisfactorily until just before the ceremony of presentation, when a salute was fired. The noise so frightened the little Horatio that he immediately bolted across the lawn into the house and hid himself. This so enraged the Colonel that he ordered his valet to fire a gun several times a day immediately over the



Gerrit Rijk

child's head, so as to accustom him to the sound. That plan was continued daily for months without much effect, for the child still shrank from the sight of a gun and shook with fear at the explosion. At last one day the old valet got the boy to fire the gun himself at a sparrow, which he killed, and from that moment he was never so happy as when he had a gun in his hand.

At the age of eighteen Horatio joined the 14th Light Dragoons, but barrack life was very irksome to him, depriving him as it did of enjoying the field sports which he loved. So after seven years' service he sold out with the rank of captain, purchased a good stud, and took up his winter quarters at Melton, then at the height of its glory, with the wildest spirits in the three kingdoms vying with one another in feats of madcap sport and reckless daring.

Of Captain Ross's matches of all kinds at Melton with Lord Kennedy I have written elsewhere in these pages. I therefore pass on to some of his notable feats at game-shooting. Of these one of the most remarkable was his great match against Colonel, afterwards General, Anson, one of the first sportsmen of his day on the Turf, in the hunting-field, and in the coverts, of whom I have told many good stories in "Kings of the Turf." He was, too, one of the greatest whist-players of his time, and in connection with his prowess at that game the following story is told. When the Indian Mutiny broke out in 1857 General Anson was Commander-in-Chief of the army in India. He started to the relief of Delhi, but his movements were cautious and slow; and when he talked of entrenching himself at Umballa, instead of marching

on the capital of the Moguls, Sir John Lawrence, impatient at the delay, wired to him, "*Clubs are trumps, not spades.*" Anson took the hint to strike, but died of cholera when he was yet forty-seven miles distant from Delhi.

Here is Captain Ross's account of the great match :

"The Ross and Anson match was made in a boat on the Thames, the party being Lord de Ros, Colonel Anson, and myself. Time, month of July, 1828; place, between the Red House and Whitehall. Lord de Ros said that it was evident no one had a chance against me at pigeons, and asked, 'Had I equal confidence in my power of shooting at game?' I replied that I thought I was able to hold my own against any man I had yet seen in the field; that I had no objection to put the matter to a fair test; and that I would make a match to shoot game against any man in Great Britain, and allow his lordship till next shooting season to fix on his man. Lord de Ros said that a match at game in covert-shooting was a very uncertain affair, as it was hardly possible so to arrange it as to give both parties fair play; that he thought on the whole a match at partridges was the most likely arrangement by which two great shots could try their powers; that he had rented some very good shooting quarters in Suffolk (Mildenhall); that he thought we might settle on a match to come off there; and that he would do his best to make it a pleasant party. After a little further conversation we had arranged everything; in fact, it was all settled before we reached Whitehall Stairs. The terms were that on November 1st I should

present myself at Mildenhall, prepared to shoot against any champion Lord de Ros brought forward ; that we were to start at sunrise by the watch and shoot until sunset without any halt ; that no dogs should be used, but that we were to walk about forty or fifty yards apart, with two or three men between or on one side of us ; that it was not necessary any birds should be picked up, the umpire's seeing them drop was to be considered sufficient. The bet was £200 a side, but to that I added considerably before the event came off."

The eventful day arrived, and Captain Ross thus describes what followed :

"We all breakfasted at Mildenhall by candle-light, and were in line ready to start at the correct moment when (by the watch) the sun had risen, for we could see no sun, as the country was enveloped in mist. Colonel Anson was a particularly fast and strong walker, and seemed to fancy he was able to outwalk me. So off he went at 'score' pace (I merely guess it), probably from four and a half to five miles an hour. I was not sorry to see him go off at 'score,' as I knew I was in the highest possible state of training, and that I was able to keep up that pace for fifteen or sixteen hours without a halt. Everything was conducted with the greatest possible fairness. We changed order every hour ; and as Colonel Anson was quite able to hold on the great pace, we were fighting against each other as fairly as two men could.

The Colonel had luck on his side, for though in the arrangement of the match as made by Lord de Ros

everything was fair, still, by mere chance birds rose more favourably for him than for me, and in the course of the match he got eleven more shots than I did ; the consequence was that at one time he was seven birds ahead of me. About two o'clock I saw evident signs of the Colonel having near about 'pumped' himself. 'The Old Squire' rode up to me, and said, 'Ross, go along ; he'll lie down directly and die'—he fancied he was viewing a beaten fox. I was thus able to go right away from the Colonel ; and as the birds were so wild (in consequence of the crowd and noise) that few shots were got nearer than fifty or sixty yards, I gradually made up my 'lee-way.'

A quarter of an hour before the expiration of the time Mr. Charles Greville and Colonel Francis Russell rode up to me and said Colonel Anson was unable to walk any more, but that he was one bird ahead of me, and that Lord de Ros had authorised them to propose to me to make it a drawn match. I had a great deal of money depending on the result (about £1,000), and had not had a shot for the last ten minutes, so, after a moment's consideration, I came to the conclusion that at that late hour, when the birds were all out of the turnips and feeding in the stubble, it was too great a sum to risk on the chance of getting a brace of birds in a quarter of an hour. I therefore agreed to make it a drawn match.

I was as fresh as when I started ; and in the excitement of the moment, and perhaps a little anxious to show that I was not beaten, I said to the assembled multitude (about five to six hundred

people) that I was ready then and there to start against anyone present to go to London on foot against him for £500, or to shoot the same match next day against anyone for £500. I excepted Mr. Osbaldeston, not wishing to have any match of *the sort* with him—he was to a great degree crippled by his leg being broken when hunting, and he could not have gone the pace with me ; and I did not like to hurt his pride by challenging him also ; and so from kindly feeling towards him I barred him. No one took advantage of my somewhat rash challenge, for it might have so happened that a regular professional pedestrian was in the crowd. Some young farmer said that he would try a race against me to the inn (perhaps two miles or two and a half distant). I entered into the fun, and said, ‘ With all my heart my good fellow.’ Many of them were on horseback and had on top-boots ; they doffed their boots and ran in their stockings. We made a fair start, all in the best humour ; but I do not think anyone was *in sight* when I reached the inn. I certainly went the distance at the rate of eight or nine miles an hour.

I do not remember the number of birds killed, but I know it was absurdly small—I think only twenty-five or twenty-six brace. This must appear very unaccountable, but it is easily explained. At that season of the year (November) the partridges in Norfolk and Suffolk are always very wild ; but on the day of the great match they had additional reason for being so : we were followed by a multitude of men on horseback—say, two or three hundred—all talking and betting on the shot.

The row was indescribable. The consequence was, that when we entered a field of turnips the partridges generally went off in one great flight at the other end of the field. Some were necessarily very long shots—fifty or sixty yards ; we hardly fired a near shot during the match.”

The Lord de Ros here mentioned was afterwards the plaintiff in the *cause célèbre* of De Ros *v.* Cumming, when he strove to clear his character by bringing an action for libel against Mr. Cumming for accusing him of cheating at cards. But the evidence in proof of his malpractices was overwhelming ; the verdict was against him, and the once popular nobleman and sportsman, thus branded as a convicted cheat, hid himself and his shame in an obscure Continental town, where he died in poverty and disgrace.

Another great shooting match of Captain Ross's had its origin in the following circumstances, which the Captain himself thus narrates :

“In the year 1824 or 1825 Lord Kennedy and Mr. William Coke (nephew of the then Mr. Coke, of Holkham) shot a match at partridges for a considerable bet. The terms were that Lord Kennedy was to shoot for two days in Scotland against Mr. William Coke, who was to shoot two days at Holkham. Mr. Coke, of course, won the match.

I paid a visit to Holkham a month or two after this, and I found them all rather pleased at the result. I could not refrain from saying that Mr. Coke must attribute his success more to the great number of birds at Holkham than to his being a better shot than Lord

Kennedy; for if they met on equal terms I felt perfectly certain he would not have the ghost of a chance with his lordship. This led ultimately to a match being made between Mr. Coke and myself, to come off at Holkham the following year. Terms: Mr. Coke, sen., to name the two 'beats'; a day to intervene between the first and second day's shooting, to allow the partridges to settle, when we were to change beats; to start as early as we pleased; to load our guns; to hunt the dogs and pick up all the birds killed; to be allowed two attendants, to help us in any way except picking up the birds, hunting the dogs, or loading, as before named.

On my way to Holkham, the following year, I paid a visit to 'the Squire' at Ebberston. I had lost by madness most of my good dogs, and those I had brought with me were indifferent, ill-broken animals. With his usual kindness 'the Squire' said he would lend me his dogs, and I went out for a day or two with them to get acquainted with them. I can say that in Yorkshire they were perfection; but it proved quite another case in Norfolk. The dogs were sent off to Holkham, and 'the Squire' and I followed, he having agreed to act as my umpire. The day after our arrival the two beats selected by Mr. Coke were pointed out to us. I tossed with Mr. W. Coke for the choice, and he won the toss.

Next morning we were up before daylight. I was accompanied by Captain Greville, R.N., as Mr. Coke's umpire. Never shall I forget my start. I entered a turnip-field, and away went 'the Squire's' fleet, high-bred dogs, and, almost before they had got half-way down the field, away went (I really believe) four or five

hundred partridges at the end of it. The dogs found a scent under every turnip; they were totally bewildered, and in a few minutes 'lost their noses' altogether. They rushed here and they rushed there—partridges were rising every moment; they 'backed,' they jumped in the air in their excitement, trying to catch the birds, and finally rushed after some, giving tongue like hounds. They followed them into the next turnip-field and cleared it also. It was very trying and very provoking, but at the same time was so absurd that Captain Greville and I burst out laughing. However, time was passing, and I had not as yet fired a shot, and I heard my opponent hard at work. I sent my two attendants to try and catch the dogs, and in about half an hour they returned with them in couples. I then put a man on each side, and walked through the fields, and at sunset had bagged forty brace.

On my way to the Hall a fine old farmer joined me—a Mr. Denny. He said he was one of Mr. Coke's principal tenants, but in spite of that he could not bear to see me defeated by mere bad luck and ignorance of the country; that I was the best shot they had ever seen, but that I knew no more how to work Norfolk partridges than a child; and that I must be beaten unless I altered my system. He then told me that his farm was the one on which I was to shoot the second day, and that if I would call on him the next forenoon (*i.e.*, the intervening day) he would give me some hints that would be useful. On reaching the Hall I found that Mr. Coke had killed fifty-four brace, so that I started the second day fourteen brace behind him.

Next day I called on Mr. Denny and we rode over the farm, and his instructions were: 'Early in the morning ride the stubble all round this field' (a very large field of turnips which he pointed out), 'and drive the birds into it. I will lend you two old setters which have only two eyes between them; they will potter about within fifteen and twenty yards, and will help to find dead birds. Place your men one on each side, and beat the field in small circles. If you go straight through it, the birds will run to the end and then rise in one great pack; but by making small circles you will cut them off and get shots. The large field will keep you going until 9 o'clock, and then go to another large field of turnips' (which he showed me).

I followed the old gentleman's instructions to the letter. I got 50 shots in the first field, and by 9 o'clock had bagged 50 partridges. I missed one shot, but killed two at a shot afterwards. The result of the day's shooting was that I bagged 59 brace, Mr. Coke 36; so that on the two days' shooting I was 9 brace ahead.

Mr. W. Coke was not a first-class shot, but he was a perfect sportsman. He thoroughly understood how to get at game; and although he was not so accurate in his shooting as some of the acknowledged great shots of his day, he was very quick, and, as a general rule, killed more game whenever he went out than other people did. He had also dogs that were perfectly adapted for Norfolk shooting: they were bred between setters and water-spaniels. When on scent they never pointed but went on, their tails straight out, and put their birds up; but as they were broken to keep within twenty-five to

thirty yards of Mr. Coke, they did no harm by flushing birds in their free-and-easy manner. They dropped to shot and retrieved dead and wounded birds beautifully, and I thought at the time if I had had them instead of 'the Squire's' high-bred pointers, I should have made a better bag the first day."

Touching this same Mr. William Coke, it was told of him that he was the first man that went in earnest deer-stalking in the Highlands. He had a pair of corduroy breeches which "Squire" Osbaldeston declared that he never took off for a fortnight. Crawling on hands and knees, he was for the time being a second Nebuchadnezzar.

Of his own grouse-shooting and deer-stalking exploits Captain Ross in a letter to a friend supplied the following particulars. "I never," he writes, "tried to make a great bag of grouse in a day; I think 65 brace was the largest number of grouse I ever shot in one day. That is nothing. Two hundred brace have since then been shot in a day by one man easily, on August 12th. In 1828 (the year of my match with Colonel Anson) I rented from the Duke of Athol a large range of shooting called Feloar. I shot 87 deer that season to my own rifle. I worked hard. I was always up at 3 a.m. and seldom back to the lodge before 7 or 8 p.m., walking, running, or crawling all the time. This was the grandest training in the world. I believe I came to the post (for the Anson match) at Mildenhall on November 1st as fit to go as winner of the Derby ever did at Epsom. In 1851 I shot 118 deer in Mar Forest. During that season I killed 13 in one day with 14 chances. In 1837 I

killed 75 deer in Sutherlandshire. These are my three best seasons."

How deadly a shot Captain Ross was with a sporting rifle may be gathered from this one instance. Purdey, the famous gunmaker, had just finished a double rifle for Lord Macdonald when Ross called at his shop. Purdey asked the Captain to try the rifle. He did so. The mark was a chalk disk exactly the size of a rifle-patch, the distance 100 yards. Ross fired six double shots and broke eleven disks.

Yet, confident as he was of his own powers as a rifle-shot, Horatio Ross, like a true sportsman, would never risk a shot at a deer unless he were certain of killing it. "I cannot," he writes, "accuse myself of having often wounded deer, because I make it a rule never to fire at deer beyond the range of 150 yards, and then only if I had a good steady view of the deer." And again: "However well men may shoot at a small mark on a target at a long distance, I venture to implore them to think of the misery and pain they may cause to poor deer for years by reckless shooting; and I beseech them to keep in mind, when getting near the end of their stalk, the words—one hundred and fifty yards."

Of Captain Ross's wonderful feats as a target-shot I have written elsewhere in these pages. Suffice it to say here that he was eleven times captain of the Scottish team for the Elcho Shield, and shot in the eight himself four times, on two occasions, in 1862 and 1863, making the highest score for Scotland, though he had then passed his sixtieth year. Once he was second of the whole sixteen English and Scotch. He

scored 147, having lost a shot, owing to a mistake of his servant in loading. Captain Heaton, of Manchester, was first with 150.

As a pigeon-shot, too, he was supreme. In a match with Lord Macdonald, to whom he gave 5 yards, shooting at 30 yards rise to his lordship's 25, Ross killed 52 birds out of 53. In 1828, after five days' keen shooting against the best shots in Great Britain and Ireland from 5 traps at 30 yards, he won the Red House Club Cup, then the Blue Riband of pigeon shooting, by grassing 76 birds out of 80. The other birds were killed but not scored, as they fell just outside the boundary and one escaped through a wire fence. So that practically the Captain accounted for *all* his birds. On another occasion Captain Ross killed 96 out of 100. If you contrast these feats with the exploits of our latter day pigeon-shots, the superiority appears to lie with the older sportsmen. Mr. Dudley Ward, in his great match with the American crack Captain Bogardus, killed 84 out of 100; and Mr. A. J. Stuart-Wortley, in his match with another famous Yankee sharpshooter Dr. Carver, killed 83 out of 100. In each case the match was a tie. But the reader will find further information on this point in my chapter on Lord Kennedy.

Amongst the many wagers between Lord Kennedy and Captain Ross was one of £20 that Ross would not shoot twenty brace of swallows on the wing in a day. It was a rash bet, for Lord Kennedy had no idea of the swarms of swallows that were flitting all day around Rossie Castle. "I sent him the twenty brace," says the Captain, "in a box, and they arrived while he and a

party were at dinner, and were brought into the dining-room. He sent me the £20, and said in his note that 'it was the most expensive *entrée* ever handed to him.'

But a far more remarkable feat was the outcome of a wager of £100 with Mr. George Foljambe. "I undertook," says Captain Ross, "to shoot ten brace of swallows with a pistol and single ball in one day. An immense number of swallows built their nests all round the towers of the Rossie Castle, and I shot the match there. 'The Squire' was staying with me at the time and saw the match shot. I shot well, as the shots were pretty long ones, the towers being three stories high and a half-sunk story. I caught the birds as they were hovering, with wings extended and pretty stationary, before going into their nests. I finished the match before breakfast."

As a pistol-shot Captain Ross had only one equal amongst his contemporaries, and that was Captain Rees Howell Gronow, whose racy "Recollections" have made him famous. These two were without doubt the best pistol-shots in the world. Neither of them was ever beaten in a match, but though many attempts were made to bring them together in competition, Gronow would never consent. He told Ross, with whom he was on intimate terms of friendship, that since his two duels in Paris, in each of which he killed his man, he could not bear the sight of a pistol.

In reference to one of those duels there is a dramatic story told. Gronow had been forced into a duel by an insolent Frenchman. They met in the Bois de Boulogne. Just before taking their places to fire, the Frenchman,

who had the reputation of being a dead shot, stuck his glove on a tree, and in a swaggering tone asked Gronow which finger he should hit? Gronow did not condescend to reply; so the Frenchman, with a shrug of the shoulders, said, "Ah! we will say the little finger, then," and with that raised his pistol, fired, and shot away the little finger of the glove; then, turning to his antagonist, said, "I will serve you in the same way."

Captain Hesse, Gronow's second, who was not long afterwards killed in a duel, said to his principal, "You must do something to try and shake that fellow's nerve; so he threw his hat high in the air. Gronow put a bullet through the centre of the crown, and then, bowing to the Frenchman, said, "*Monsieur, voilà votre destinée.*" Two minutes later the Frenchman lay dead with a bullet through his brain.

Captain Ross, unlike Gronow, not only never fought a duel, but never saw one fought, though he was in constant request as a second. "As far as it was in my power to do so," he says, "I from the first set my face against duelling, and during my longish life I never sent or received a challenge, nor did I ever see a duel fought. I have, however, acted for other people no less than *sixteen* times, and I have in every case managed to get the difference made up in a satisfactory manner. In some cases it appeared at first almost hopeless; but by keeping cool, being patient, and appealing to the good feeling and good sense of the opposite second, I have at last always brought him to an amiable state of mind, and then it was comparatively easy to settle matters without resorting to the 'trial by battle.'"

Ross's style of pistol-shooting, however, was not of the sort that makes a man a deadly duellist. He was a slow, steady shot who dwelt upon his aim ; and at quick snap-shooting he was not great, perhaps because he did not care to practise it. But he never lost a pistol match in his life. On one occasion he was challenged to shoot fifty shots at a target by a Spanish gentleman who prided himself on his deadly aim. The match, for £50 a side, came off at the Red House, Battersea. The distance was very short, only twelve yards, the target a common playing-card, on the back of which was marked a bull's-eye exactly the size of a sixpence. Ross won easily, and in his last twenty-five shots hit the bull's-eye twenty-three times.

But it was at long-range pistol-shooting that he excelled. He once shot a match, pistol against rifle, with Lord Vernon at a hundred yards and won. And on the same day won £100 from Henry Baring, who bet ten to one that Ross would not hit his hat with a pistol bullet at a hundred yards. On several occasions he killed deer, both roe and fallow, with a pistol at distances over fifty yards.

Captain Ross's sons Edward (the first winner of the Queen's Prize at Wimbledon), Hercules, and Colin were all fine rifle-shots both at game and at targets, but none of them was anything like the equal of their father at all-round shooting.

There was another and a very different art in which Captain Ross was also an expert. When in 1839 Mr. Henry Fox Talbot first made public his mode of multiplying photographic impressions by producing a

negative photograph, Captain Ross became one of his most ardent disciples. The great sportsman worked as hard to perfect himself in this new art as he had ever done to attain his unrivalled skill with gun, rifle, and pistol; and in those early days of photography he had probably few equals, amateur or professional, as a skilled practitioner in every branch of the art, the details of which he had laboriously mastered. He could boast that, with the exception of M. Claudet and Mr. Talbot, he was the oldest photographer in Great Britain.

To the last Horatio Ross retained his superb health, his extraordinary vigour, and his skill with gun and rifle. Writing to his friend Mr. Snowie, of Inverness, in 1881, he says: "Saturday was my sixty-ninth 'Twelfth.' On September 5th, if I be alive, I shall be eighty-one years old. I was up this morning at 3 a.m. to go to a particular part of the forest, but heavy rain sent me back to bed. I have killed five stags, all in marvelously good condition."

And what was the secret of the phenomenal health and energy which enabled Horatio Ross to perform at four-score feats of endurance which most men of half that age would be proud of accomplishing? He tells us himself, and his words are worth taking to heart. "It may be useful to others," he writes, "if I state what I believe to be the cause of my preserving until so late a period of life the activity of a man of middle age. I attribute it in a great measure to my having always kept myself in a state of moderate training. I have always lived well, and for many years have drunk

nothing but light claret, one bottle per diem : but I have never omitted, wherever I was, whether in town or country, whether the weather was fair or the reverse, to walk regularly eight miles, and generally twelve miles, every day of my life, unless I had an opportunity of going out shooting. I have also for a great many years been very particular in taking a sponging bath of cold water every morning."

A simple regimen ! but one that not many men have either the opportunity or the inclination to adopt.

Not till four years after that letter to Mr. Snowie, on December 6th, 1886, did the grand old sportsman pass behind the veil. He has left none like him : the heroic breed to which he belonged is extinct.

Roualeyn George Gordon Cumming

THE honour of being the Pioneer or Father of South African Sport rests between two great British hunters—Sir William Cornwallis Harris and Roualeyn George Gordon Cumming. In point of time Sir William Cornwallis Harris has undoubtedly first claim to the title. But his book, which was published in 1837, though it appealed powerfully to sportsmen, took little hold of the general public, and his name is remembered now only by those who are versed in the lore of Big Game Shooting. Gordon Cumming, on the other hand, took the public by storm with his "Five Years of Hunter's Life in the Far Interior of South Africa." The book was read with as much avidity as a romance by all sorts and conditions of men; the author became a "lion" in society; for years his name was as familiar in our mouths as household words, and still keeps its place in the memories of those of us who were boys when the great "lion-hunter" was a popular hero in the full flush of his fame. There was a mixture of sentiment and sport in his pages which gave them a romantic interest in the eyes of the great bulk of the reading public of

that day. And the man himself corresponded with the popular notion of a daring hunter and adventurer. He was a splendid fellow physically—a veritable king of men—of towering height, of massive yet symmetrical frame suggestive of immense strength, with a bold, handsome face, the proud bearing of a Highland chief, and an eye bright and piercing as an eagle's. Arrayed, as he always was in public, in full Highland costume, he made a picturesque and striking figure in whatever company he was. There were some, no doubt, who thought him a flashy and theatrical *poseur*; but I think they went as far wrong in one direction as those whose admiration elevated him into a hero of romance went in the other. What he really was I shall endeavour to show by a brief sketch of his career, illustrated by extracts from his own book.

Roualeyn George Gordon Cumming was a younger son of Sir William George Gordon Cumming, Bart., of Altyre and Gordonstown. His mother was Eliza Maria, daughter of Colonel John Campbell, of Islay, who married Lady Charlotte Campbell, daughter of the sixth Duke of Argyll. Born on March 15th, 1820, Roualeyn was sent at the age of nine to Eton. Even as a boy he distinguished himself in his Highland home by his passion for sport and his precocious skill both in deer-stalking and salmon-fishing. A commission was purchased for him in the Honourable East India Company's service, and at the age of eighteen he was gazetted cornet in the Madras Cavalry. On his way out he stopped for some time at the Cape and had his first experience of South African sport. On arriving in

India he found the climate utterly unsuited to him. For eighteen months he fought against it ; but his health became so seriously affected that in 1840 he resigned his commission and returned to Scotland. For a while he devoted himself to deer-stalking, but he soon found that sport too tame for him. He felt the instincts of "the wild hunter" stirring in him, and longed for more exciting adventures than fall to the share of "the mere sportsman." An ensigncy in the "Royal Veteran Newfoundland Company" promised some prospect of the sport he craved for in the Western Hemisphere. But his hopes in this direction were not fulfilled. Disappointed and disgusted, he exchanged in 1843 into the Cape Mounted Rifles. There he found himself on the threshold of the Hunter's Paradise. Sport had more attractions for him than soldiering, and he resigned his commission after a few months' service. His mind was now made up. He would explore that vast, unknown interior, teeming with game, of which as yet scarcely more than the fringes had been touched. He sought out traders well acquainted with Griqualand, Bechuana, and the country beyond the great Orange River, and got as much information from them as he could, though it was not much they could give him, beyond hints as to his outfit. For they traded only with the Dutch Boers, loading up their waggons from the large stores of the merchants at Grahamstown and Port Elizabeth with groceries, hardware, haberdashery, crockery, saddlery—in short, every conceivable article that the Boers, living as they then did in isolated farmsteads, could possibly want.

"I was utterly in the dark," says Gordon Cumming, "as to what sport I might expect to realise and what difficulties I should have to encounter, and there was no one to enlighten me." His sporting friends at the Cape assured him that game had all retreated into such remote and savage parts that no sportsman could reach them, and that his proposed expedition was sheer midsummer madness. "You'll only get sunstroke and dysentery," they said, "and it's twenty to one against your ever coming back alive."

But Roualeyn turned a deaf ear to these croakers, bought a couple of waggons, with teams of oxen, hired three natives and one Englishman (an ex-Cockney cabman !), and set out on his adventures.

It may interest sportsmen to know what "battery" he took with him, and I therefore quote the following :

"My ordnance was as follows: 3 double-barrelled rifles by Purdey, William Moore, and Dickson of Edinburgh—the latter a two-grooved, the most perfect and useful rifle I ever had the pleasure of using; one heavy single-barrelled German rifle, carrying 12 to the lb. This last was an old companion, which had been presented to me when a boy, by my dear and much-lamented friend and brother-sportsman, the late James Duff, of Innes House. With this rifle, about ten years before, I had brought down my first stag on the Paps of Jura, and subsequently bowled over many a master-stag, and graceful roebuck in his summer coat, throughout the glens and forests of my native land. The Purdey was also a tried friend, both it and the heavy German having been with me in several campaigns on the plains

and in the jungles of Hindostan. I had also 3 stout double-barrelled guns, for rough work when hard riding and quick loading is required; several lead-ladles of various sizes, a whole host of bullet-moulds, loading-rods, shot-belts, powder-flasks, and shooting-belts; 3 cwt. of lead, 50 lbs. of pewter for hardening the balls to be used in destroying the larger game; 10,000 prepared leaden bullets, bags of shot of all sizes; 100 lbs. of fine sporting gunpowder, 300 lbs. of coarse gunpowder; about 50,000 percussion caps; 2,000 gun flints, greased patches, and cloth to be converted into the same. I carried also several spare yokes, yoke-skeys, whip-sticks, rheims, and straps, two sets of spare linch-pins, all of which last articles belong to the waggon. With the above and 200*l.* in cash which I carried with me, I considered myself prepared to undertake a journey of at least twelve months amongst Boers or Bechuanas, independent of either."

With the Boer settlers he came into frequent contact, and found them almost uniformly hospitable and friendly, a fact which he thus curiously explains: "It is a strange thing that Boers are rather partial to Scotchmen, although they detest the sight of an Englishman. They have an idea that the Scotch, like themselves, were a nation conquered by the English, and that consequently we trek in the same yoke as themselves." So, fifty years ago the race-hatred was as strong and bitter as it is now. Many of the poorer Boers subsisted entirely by hunting; but Gordon Cumming thought very little of their skill as marksmen, and tells how four officers of the 91st Regiment, then quartered at Colesberg,

challenged any four Dutchmen to shoot, and how the latter were "jolly well licked." Still less did the Scottish hunter think of the personal attractions of the Boer women. "Their beauty," he says, "like that of Skye terriers, I fear in many cases consists in their ugliness. They, however, sadly lack the *dégage* appearance of the Skye terrier, as their general air and gait might be more aptly likened to a yard of pump water." But some of the wives and daughters of the Boers he found "rather nice people," and they were always kind and civil, even when their surly, drunken men-folk were insolent and inhospitable.

When at last he got into the game-country his astonishment was greater even than his delight. "The whole country, as far as my eye could reach, was white with springboks, with here and there a herd of black gnoos or wildebeeste prancing and capering." But the most remarkable sight which Gordon Cumming witnessed, a sight the like to which no European sportsman is ever likely to witness again, was that which he thus graphically describes :

"On the 28th I had the satisfaction of beholding, for the first time, what I had often heard the Boers allude to—*viz.*, a 'trek-bokken,' or grand migration of springboks. This was, I think the most extraordinary and striking scene, as connected with beasts of the chase, that I have ever beheld. For about two hours before the day dawned, I had been lying awake in my waggon, listening to the grunting of the bucks within two hundred yards of me, imagining that some large herd of springbok was feeding beside my camp ; but on my

rising when it was clear, and looking about me, I beheld the ground to the northward of my camp, actually covered by a dense living mass of springboks, marching slowly and steadily along and extending from an opening in a long range of hills on the west, through which they continued pouring like the flood of some great river, to a ridge about a mile to the north-east, over which they disappeared. The breadth of the ground they covered might have been somewhere about half a mile. I stood upon the fore chest of my waggon for about two hours, lost in wonder at the novel and wonderful scene which was passing before me, and had some difficulty in convincing myself that it was reality which I beheld, and not the wild and exaggerated picture of a hunter's dream. During this time their vast legions continued streaming through the neck in the hills in one unbroken compact phalanx. At length I saddled up, and rode into the midst of them, with my rifle, and after-riders, and fired into the ranks until fourteen had fallen, when I cried 'Enough.' We then retraced our steps to secure the venison which lay strewn along my gory track. Having collected the springboks at different bushes, and concealed them with brushwood, we returned to camp, where I partook of coffee while my men were inspanning.

A person anxious to kill many springboks might have bagged thirty or forty that morning. I never, in all my subsequent career, fell in with so dense a herd of these antelopes, nor found them allow me to ride so near them. Having inspanned, we proceeded with the waggons to take up the fallen game, which being

accomplished, we held for the small periodical stream beside which the wandering Boers were encamped, that being in my line of march for Beer Vley. Vast and surprising as was the herd of springboks which I had that morning witnessed, it was infinitely surpassed by what I beheld on the march from my vley to old Sweir's camp; for on our clearing the low range of hills through which the springboks had been pouring, I beheld the boundless plains, and even the hill sides which stretched away on every side of me, thickly covered, not with 'herds,' but with 'one vast herd' of springboks; far as the eye could strain the landscape was alive with them, until they softened down into a dim red mass of living creatures."

These vast herds of antelopes, hundreds of thousands of them, quickly consumed every green herb and passed on, leaving a desert behind them and compelling the unfortunate Boer farmers to trek with all their belongings to fresh pasture-lands. They were nearly, if not quite, as bad as the locusts—another terrible plague to the South African farmer which Gordon Cumming graphically describes.

Still pursuing his way towards the unknown land where the biggest game was to be found, the hunter fell in with Dr. Moffat, the afterwards celebrated Scotch missionary, whose, "noble, athletic frame," and face—"on which forbearance and Christian charity were very plainly written," impressed him greatly. The Doctor he describes as "minister, gardener, blacksmith, gunsmith, mason, carpenter, glazier," and after partaking of his hospitality, Cumming set off in the direction

in which Moffat's son-in-law Dr. Livingstone, as yet unknown to fame, was settled. Here, too, our hunter stayed awhile, and was made gladly welcome by his brother Scot.

Still the land of promise lay onwards. A dreary distance of two hundred miles over rugged and apparently impassable mountain-ranges, wide-rolling sandy plains destitute of water, and vast trackless forests, lay between Bakatla, Dr. Livingstone's missionary station, and Bamangwate, the grand district of the elephants; and the interpreter and guides who had been hired for the expedition did their utmost to dissuade the bold Scot from advancing by drawing frightful pictures of the difficulties of the way. He was also exposed to another annoyance which threw on him an additional burden. The Bechuanas were extremely fond of flesh, which they considered the only food befitting man. Corn and milk they reckoned the food of women. Having no flesh at home and being seldom able to kill large game for themselves, they entertained great respect for those who killed plenty of venison for them, and they would travel to very great distances for the purpose of obtaining it. Hence Cumming found himself transformed into a South African chief, with a ready-made clan following at his heels, all blessed with splendid digestions, clamorous for animal food, and regarding him as their legitimate purveyor. Many a weary hour was he forced to pass in the saddle, in order to satisfy the appetites of these carnivorous attendants. Fortunately they were not very particular as to quality, for they would sit down with satisfaction to a meal of rhinoceros or crocodile

when the more delicate treat of eland steaks or buffalo hump was wanting. If it be Christian charity to feed the hungry, Gordon Cumming surely had a good and sufficient answer to give those who accused him of a wanton and intemperate passion for the chase. As one of the charges brought against him was his wanton and wasteful slaughter of game, it is only fair to let him rebut that charge.

"It was ever," he says, "to me a source of great pleasure to reflect that, while enriching myself in following my favourite pursuit of elephant-hunting I was feeding and making happy the starving families of hundreds of the Bechuana and Bakalahari tribes, who invariably followed my waggons, and assisted me in my hunting, in numbers varying from fifty to two hundred at a time. These men were often accompanied by their wives and families, and when an elephant, hippopotamus, or other large animal was slain, all hands repaired to the spot, when every inch of the animal was reduced to biltongue, *viz.*, cut into long narrow strips, and hung in festoons upon poles, and dried in the sun: even the entrails were not left for the vultures and hyenas, and the very bones were chopped to pieces with their hatchets to obtain the marrow, with which they enriched their soup."

Finding that his Scottish costume created an impression both among the Boers and natives, Gordon Cumming stuck to it both on foot and horseback, despite the fact that the kilt afforded no protection to his legs, which were consequently torn and lacerated by the terrible thorns. The retention of the Highland garb was more

creditable to his patriotic sentiment than to his common sense. But then Roualeyn was full of sentiment. Take for example his narrative of the adventure on "the memorable day the first on which I saw and slew the lofty graceful-looking giraffe or cameleopard, with which during many years of my life, I had longed to form an acquaintance":

"The giraffes stood looking at the waggons till I was within sixty yards of them, when galloping round a thick bushy tree under cover of which I had ridden, I suddenly beheld a sight, the most astounding that a sportsman's eye can encounter. Before me stood a group of ten colossal giraffes, the majority of which were from seventeen to eighteen feet high. On beholding me they at once made off, twisting their long tails over their backs, making a loud switching noise with them, and cantered along at an easy pace which however, obliged Colesberg [his horse] to put his best foot foremost to keep up with them.

The sensations which I felt on this occasion were different from anything that I had before experienced during a long sporting career. My senses were so absorbed by the wondrous and beautiful sight before me that I rode along like one entranced, and felt inclined to disbelieve that I was hunting living things of this world. The ground was firm, and favourable for riding. At every stride I gained on the giraffes, and after a short burst at a swinging gallop, I was in the middle of them, and turned the finest cow out of the herd. On finding herself driven from her companions and hotly pursued, she increased her pace, and

galloped along with tremendous strides, clearing an amazing extent of ground at every bound ; while her neck and breast coming in contact with the old dead branches of the trees were continually strewing them in my path. In a few minutes I was riding within five yards of her stern, and firing, at the gallop, I sent a bullet into her back. Increasing my pace, I next rode alongside, and placing the muzzle of my rifle within a few feet of her I fired my second shot behind the shoulder ; the ball, however, seemed to have little effect. I then placed myself directly in front, when she came to a walk. Dismounting, I hastily loaded both barrels, putting in double charges of powder. Before this was accomplished she was off at a canter. In a short time I brought her to a stand in the dry bed of a water-course, where I fired at fifteen yards, aiming where I thought the heart lay, upon which she again made off. Having loaded, I followed, and had very nearly lost her ; she had turned abruptly to the left, and was far out of sight among the trees. Once more I brought her to a stand, and dismounted from my horse. There we stood together, alone in the wild wood. I gazed in wonder at her extreme beauty, while her soft dark eye, with its silky fringe, looked down imploringly at me, and I really felt a pang of sorrow in this moment of triumph for the blood I was shedding. Pointing my rifle towards the skies, I sent a bullet through her neck. On receiving it she reared high on her hind legs, and fell backwards with a heavy crash, making the earth shake around her. A thick stream of dark blood spouted out

from the wound, her colossal limbs quivered for a moment, and she expired.

I had little time to contemplate the prize I had won. Night was setting in, and it was very questionable if I should succeed in regaining my waggons; so having cut off the tail of the giraffe, which was adorned with a bushy tuft of flowing black hair, I took 'one last fond look,' and rode hard for the spoor of the waggons, which I succeeded in reaching just as it was dark.

No pen nor words can convey to a sportsman what it is to ride in the midst of a troop of gigantic giraffes: it must be experienced to be understood. They emitted a powerful perfume, which in the chase came hot in my face, reminding me of the smell of a hive of heather honey in September."

Gordon Cumming was a firm believer in the effect of the human voice on wild animals. He tried it on one occasion upon a lioness whom he disturbed as she was gorging herself upon a blesbok, just after a tropical thunderstorm. On lifting her head and observing the hunter, the lioness promptly cantered off, hotly pursued by Gordon Cumming on horseback, and the sequel I will leave him to tell.

"The lioness having had a long start of me, we went over a considerable extent of ground before I came up with her. She was a large full grown beast, and the bare and level nature of the plain added to her imposing appearance. Finding that I gained upon her, she reduced her pace from a canter to a trot, carrying her tail stuck out behind her, and slewed a little to one side. *I shouted loudly to her to halt as I wished to speak*

to her, upon which she suddenly pulled up, and sat on her haunches like a dog, with her back towards me, not even deigning to look round. She appeared to say to herself, 'Does this fellow know whom he is after?' Having thus sat for half a minute, as if involved in thought, she sprang to her feet, and facing about, stood looking at me for a few seconds, moving her tail slowly from side to side, showing her teeth and growling fiercely. She next made a short run forwards, making a loud rumbling noise like thunder. This she did to intimidate me; but finding that I did not flinch an inch, nor seem to heed her hostile demonstrations, she quietly stretched out her massive arms, and lay down on the grass. My Hottentots now coming up, we all three dismounted. . . . While this was doing, the lioness sat up and showed evident symptoms of uneasiness. She looked first at us, and then behind her, as if to see if the coast were clear; after which she made a short run towards us, uttering her deep-drawn, murderous growls. Having secured the three horses to one another by their reins we led them on as if we intended to pass her, in the hope of obtaining a broadside; but this she carefully avoided to expose, presenting only her full front. . . . My men as yet had been steady, but they were in a precious stew, their faces having assumed a ghastly paleness; and I had a painful feeling that I could place no reliance on them.

Now then for it, neck or nothing! She is within sixty yards of us, and keeps advancing. We turned the horses' tails towards her. I knelt on one side, and taking a steady aim at her breast, let fly. The ball

cracked loudly on her tawny hide, and crippled her in the shoulder, upon which she charged us with an appalling roar, and in the twinkling of an eye she was in the midst of us. At this moment Stofulus's rifle exploded in his hand, and Kleinboy, whom I had ordered to stand by me, danced about like a duck in a gale of wind. The lioness sprang upon Colesberg, and fearfully lacerated his ribs and haunches with her claws; the worst wound was on his haunch, which exhibited a yawning gash more than twelve inches long, almost laying bare the very bone. I was very cool and steady, and did not feel the least nervous, having, fortunately, great confidence in my own shooting; but I must confess, when the whole affair was over, I felt it was a very awful situation and attended with extreme peril, as I had no friend with me on whom I could rely.

When the lioness sprang on Colesberg, I stood out from the horses, ready with my second barrel for the first chance she should give me of a clear shot. This she quickly did; for, seemingly satisfied with the revenge she had now taken, she quitted Colesberg, and slewing her tail to one side, trotted sulkily past, within a few paces of me. Taking one step to the left, I pitched my rifle to my shoulder, and in another second the lioness was stretched upon the plain a corpse."

On another occasion he had a little colloquy with a lioness which had a less sensational ending both for the lioness and himself; in fact, each had too much respect for the other to proceed to extremities. This is how the hunter describes what happened:

"Ruyter came towards me, and I ran forward to obtain a view beyond a slight rise in the ground, to see whither the lioness had gone. In so doing I came suddenly upon two of them, within about seventy yards: they were standing looking back at Ruyter. I then very rashly commenced making a rapid stalk in upon them, and fired at the nearest, having only one shot in my rifle. The ball told loudly; and the lioness at which I had fired wheeled right round, and came on, lashing her tail, showing her teeth, and making that horrid murderous deep growl which an angry lion generally utters. At the same moment her comrade, who seemed better to know that she was in the presence of man, made a hasty retreat into the reeds. The instant the lioness came on, I stood up to my full height, holding my rifle and my arms extended, and high above my head. This checked her in her course; but on looking round and missing her comrade, and observing Ruyter slowly advancing, she was still more exasperated; and, fancying that she was being surrounded, she made another forward movement, growling terribly. This was a moment of great danger. I felt that my only chance of safety was extreme steadiness; so standing motionless on a rock, with my eyes firmly fixed upon her, I called out in a clear, commanding voice, 'Holloa, old girl, what's the hurry? take it easy; holloa! holloa!' She instantly once more halted, and seemed perplexed, looking round for her comrade. I then thought it prudent to beat a retreat, which I very slowly did, talking to the lioness all the time. She seemed undecided as to her future movements,

and was gazing after me, and snuffing the ground when I last beheld her !”

Such is the man's version of the incident. One would like to know what the lioness's version was when she told the story, as she doubtless did, to her leonine lord in the evening.

Gordon Cumming's favourite method of shooting was to dig a hole near some pool or fountain, and wait ensconced there till the beasts came down to drink. On one occasion he had rather a disagreeable surprise. He had just shot an antelope and a hyena from his hiding-place, and having lain down without taking the precaution of reloading his rifle, fell asleep.

“I had not slept long,” he said, “when my light dreams were influenced by strange sounds. I dreamt that lions were rushing about in quest of me ; and, the sounds increasing, I awoke with a sudden start, uttering a loud shriek. I could not for several seconds remember in what part of the world I was, or anything connected with my present position. I heard the rushing of light feet, as of a pack of wolves, close on every side of me, accompanied by the most unearthly sounds. On raising my head, to my utter horror, I saw on every side nothing but wild dogs chattering and growling. On my right and on my left, and within a few paces of me, stood two lines of these ferocious-looking animals, cocking their ears and stretching their necks to have a look at me ; while two large troops, in which there were at least forty of them, kept dashing backwards and forwards across my wind within a few yards of me, chattering and growling with the most extraordinary

volubility. Another troop of dogs were fighting over the wildebeeste I had shot, which they had begun to devour. On beholding them I expected no other fate than to be instantly torn to pieces and consumed. I felt my blood curdling along my cheeks, and my hair bristling on my head. However, I had presence of mind to consider that the human voice and a determined bearing might overawe them; and accordingly, springing to my feet I stepped on to the little ledge surrounding the hole, where, drawing myself up to my full height, I waved my large blanket with both hands, at the same time addressing my savage assembly in a loud and solemn manner. This had the desired effect: the wild dogs retired to a more respectful distance, barking at me something like collies. Upon this I snatched up my rifle and commenced loading; and before this the entire pack had passed away, and did not return."

Strange sights indeed met the hunter's eye when he thus lay in ambush at the watering-places. Here is his record of a particularly thrilling experience after killing a rhinoceros:

"On reaching the water I looked towards the carcase of a rhinoceros, and to my astonishment I beheld the ground alive with large creatures, as though a troop of zebras were approaching the fountain to drink. Kleinboy remarked to me that a troop of zebras were standing on the height. I answered 'Yes'; but I knew very well that zebras would not be capering around the carcase of a rhinoceros. I quickly arranged my blankets, pillow, and guns in the hole, and then lay

down to feast my eyes on the interesting sight before me. It was bright moonlight, as clear as I need wish, and within one night of being full moon. There were six large lions, about twelve or fifteen hyenas, and from twenty to thirty jackals feasting on and around the carcasses of the three rhinoceroses. The lions feasted peacefully, but the hyenas and jackals fought over every mouthful, and chased one another round and round the carcasses, growling, laughing, screeching, chattering and howling without any intermission. The hyenas did not seem afraid of the lions, although they always gave way before them; for I observed that they followed them in the most disrespectful manner, and stood laughing, one or two on either side, when any lions came after their comrades to examine pieces of skin or bones which they were dragging away. I had lain watching this banquet for about three hours, in the strong hope that, when the lions had feasted, they would come and drink. Two black and two white rhinoceroses had made their appearance, but scared by the smell of the blood, they had made off.

At length the lions seemed satisfied. They all walked about with their heads up, and seemed to be thinking about the water; and, in two minutes one of them turned his face towards me, and came on; he was immediately followed by a second lion, and in half a minute by the remaining four. It was a decided and general move; they were all coming to drink right bang in my face, within fifteen yards of me.

I charged the unfortunate, pale and panting Kleinboy to convert himself into a stone; and knowing from old

spoor exactly where they would drink, I cocked my left barrel, and placed myself and gun in position. The six lions came steadily along the stony ridge, until within sixty yards of me, when they halted for a minute to reconnoitre. One of them stretched out his massive arms on the rock and lay down; the others came on, and he then rose and brought up the rear. They walked, as I had anticipated to the old drinking place, and three of them had put down their heads, and were lapping the water loudly, when Kleinboy thought it necessary to shove up his ugly head. I turned slowly to rebuke him, and again turning to the lions, found myself discovered.

An old lioness, who seemed to take the lead, had detected me, and with her head high, and her eyes fixed full upon me she was coming slowly round the corner of the little vley to cultivate further my acquaintance! This unfortunate coincidence put a stop to all further contemplation. I thought in my haste that it was perhaps most prudent to shoot this lioness, especially as none of the others had noticed me. I accordingly moved my arm and covered her; she saw me move, and halted, exposing a full broadside. I fired; the ball entered one shoulder and passed out behind the other. She bounded forward with repeated growls, and was followed by her five comrades, all enveloped in a cloud of dust; nor did they stop until they had reached the cover behind me, except one old gentleman, who halted and looked back for a few seconds, when I fired, but the ball went high. I listened anxiously for some sound to denote the approaching end of the lioness;

nor listened in vain. I heard her growling and stationary, as if dying. In one minute her comrade crossed the vley, a little below me, and made towards the rhinoceros. I then slipped Wolf and Boxer on her scent, and following them into the cover, I found her lying dead within twenty yards of where the old lion had lain two nights before. This was a fine old lioness with perfect teeth, and was certainly a noble prize ; but I felt dissatisfied at not having shot a lion which I had most certainly done if my Hottentot had not destroyed my contemplation."

But our hero's most tragic adventure with a lion was the following, the appalling recollection of which, he tells us, long haunted him and left an impression which he was never able wholly to shake off :

"About three hours after sundown I called to my men to come and take their coffee and supper, which was ready for them at my fire ; and after supper, three of them returned before their comrades to their own fireside, and lay down. These were John Stofolus, Hendrick and Ruyter. In a few minutes an ox came out by the gate of the kraal, and walked round the back of it. Hendrick got up and drove him in again, and then went back to his fireside and lay down. Hendrick and Ruyter lay on one side of the fire under one blanket, and John Stofolus lay on the other. At this moment I was sitting taking some barley-broth ; our fire was very small, and the night was pitch-dark and windy. . . .

Suddenly the appalling and murderous voice of an angry, bloodthirsty lion burst upon my ear, within a



THE FATE OF HENDRICK.

few yards of us, followed by the shrieking of the Hottentots. Again and again the murderous roar of attack was repeated. We heard John and Ruyter shriek, 'The lion! the lion!' still, for a few moments, we thought he was but chasing one of the dogs round the kraal; but next instant, John Stofolus rushed into the midst of us almost speechless with fear, his eyes bursting from their sockets, and shrieked out, 'The lion! the lion! He has got Hendrick; he dragged him away from the fire beside me. I struck him with the burning brands upon his head, but he would not let go his hold. Oh, God! Hendrick is dead! Let us take fire and seek him.' The rest of my people rushed about, shrieking and yelling as if they were mad. I was at once angry with them for their folly, and told them that if they did not stand still and keep quiet the lion would have another of us; and that very likely there was a troop of them. I ordered the dogs, which were nearly all fast, to be made loose, and the fire to be increased as far as could be. I then shouted Hendrick's name, but all was still. I told my men that Hendrick was dead, and that a regiment of soldiers could not now help him, and, hunting my dogs forward, I had everything brought within the cattle-kraal, when we lighted our fire and closed the entrance as well as we could.

My terrified people sat round the fire with guns in their hands till the day broke, still fancying every moment that the lion would return, and spring again into the midst of us. When the dogs were first let go, the stupid brutes, as dogs often prove when most

required, instead of going at the lion, rushed fiercely on one another, and fought desperately for some minutes. After this they got his wind, and, going at him, disclosed his position : they kept up a continued barking until the day dawned, the lion occasionally springing after them, and driving them in upon the kraal. The horrible monster lay all night within forty yards of us, consuming the wretched man whom he had chosen for his prey. He had dragged him into a little hollow at the back of the thick bush beside which the fire was kindled, and there he remained till the day dawned, careless of our proximity.

It appeared that when the unfortunate Hendrick rose to drive in the ox, the lion had watched him to his fireside, and he had scarcely lain down when the brute sprang upon him and Ruyter (for both lay under one blanket) with his appalling murderous roar, and, roaring as he lay, grappled him with his fearful claws, and kept biting him on the breast and shoulder, all the while feeling for his neck ; having got hold of which he at once dragged him away backwards round the bush into the dense shade.

As the lion lay upon the unfortunate man he faintly cried, ' Help me, help me ! Oh, God ! men, help me ! ' After which the fearful beast got a hold on his neck, and then all was still, except that his comrades heard the bones of his neck cracking between the teeth of the lion. John Stofolus had lain with his back to the fire on the opposite side, and on hearing the lion he sprang up, and seizing a large flaming brand, he belaboured him on the head with the burning wood ;

but the brute did not take any notice of him. The Bushman had a narrow escape ; he was not altogether scatheless, the lion having inflicted two gashes in his seat with his claws.

The next morning, just as the day began to dawn, we heard the lion dragging something up the river-side, under cover of the bank. We drove the cattle out of the kraal, and then proceeded to inspect the scene of the night's awful tragedy."

That "something" was the mangled carcass of Hendrick. By fragments of flesh and clothing they tracked the lion till they came up with him, and Gordon Cumming had the supreme satisfaction of sending a bullet through the heart of the man-eater.

I think that the comments with which Gordon Cumming winds up his experiences of lion-slaying are too delicious to be omitted. I do not know which to admire the more in them—the hidden egotism or the unconscious humour. Here they are, and I leave the reader to take them as he pleases :

"I may remark that lion hunting, under any circumstances, is decidedly a dangerous pursuit. It may, nevertheless, be followed, to a certain extent, with comparative safety by those who have naturally a turn for that sort of thing. A recklessness of death, perfect coolness and self-possession, an acquaintance with the disposition and manners of lions, and a tolerable knowledge of the use of the rifle, are indispensable to him who would shine in the overpoweringly exciting pastime of hunting this justly celebrated king of beasts."

From which the reader will perceive how simple are

the qualifications of a lion-hunter if one only has "naturally a turn for that sort of thing"!

I must candidly confess that Gordon Cumming's sentiment is frequently nauseating. He is for ever commiserating the fate of the animals he kills, till one feels inclined to exclaim in exasperation, "What the devil did you kill the beast for, if it makes you snivel to contemplate its death?" "Poor old bull! I could not help pitying him!" is the sort of thing which one finds *ad nauseam* in Gordon Cumming's volumes. Here, for example, is a piece of gush which is sickening: "It was a princely old buck. On beholding him I was struck with wonder and delight. My heart beat with excitement. I would have given half what I possessed in this world for a broadside at that lovely antelope."

But for æsthetic enjoyment of the spectacle of pain, worthy almost of Nero, commend me to the following:

"We followed the spoor through level forest in an easterly direction, when the leading party overran the spoor, and casts were made for its recovery. Presently I detected an excited native beckoning violently a little to my left, and cantering up to him, he said that he had seen the elephant. He led me through the forest a few hundred yards, when, clearing a wait-a-bit, I came full in view of the tallest and largest bull elephant I had ever seen. He stood broadside to me, at upwards of a hundred yards, and his attention at the moment was occupied with the dogs, which, unaware of his proximity, were rushing past him, while the old fellow seemed to gaze at their unwonted appearance with surprise.

Halting my horse, I fired at his shoulder, and secured him with a single shot. The ball caught him high upon the shoulder-blade, rendering him instantly dead lame; and before the echo of the bullet could reach my ear, I plainly saw that the elephant was mine. The dogs now came up and barked around him, but, finding himself incapacitated, the old fellow seemed determined to take it easy, and limping slowly to a neighbouring tree, he remained stationary, eyeing his pursuers with a resigned and philosophic air.

I resolved to devote a short time to the contemplation of this noble elephant before I should lay him low; accordingly having off-saddled the horses beneath a shady tree which was to be my quarters for the night and ensuing day, I quickly kindled a fire and put on the kettle, and in a very few minutes my coffee was prepared. There I sat in my forest home, coolly sipping my coffee with one of the finest elephants in Africa awaiting my pleasure beside a neighbouring tree. It was indeed a striking scene; and as I gazed upon the stupendous veteran of the forest, I thought of the red deer which I loved to follow in my native land, and felt that, though the Fates had driven me to follow a more daring and arduous avocation in a distant land, it was a good exchange which I had made, for I was now a chief over boundless forests which yielded unspeakably more noble and exciting sport.

Having admired the elephant for a considerable time I resolved to make experiments for vulnerable points, and, approaching very near, I fired several bullets at different parts of his enormous skull. These did not seem to

affect him in the slightest ; he only acknowledged the shots by a 'salaam-like' movement of his trunk, with the point of which he gently touched the wound with a striking and peculiar action. *Surprised and shocked to find that I was only tormenting and prolonging the sufferings of the noble beast*, which bore his trials with such dignified composure, I resolved to finish the proceeding with all possible dispatch ; accordingly I opened fire upon him from the left side, aiming behind the shoulder ; but even there it was long before my bullets seemed to take effect. I first fired six shots with the two-grooved, which must have eventually proved mortal, but as yet he evinced no visible distress ; after which I fired three shots with the Dutch six-pounder. Large tears now trickled from his eyes, which he slowly shut and opened ; his colossal frame quivered convulsively, and, falling on his side, he expired. The tusks of this elephant were beautifully arched, and were the heaviest I had yet met with, averaging 90 lbs. weight apiece."

Note the passages I have italicised, and then ask yourself, gentle reader, what value you would put upon the sentiment which enabled a man to sip his coffee coolly and sit rhapsodising over the tortures of a wounded beast when it was in his power in a moment to put the creature out of its misery ! And then that affectation of being surprised and shocked ! Faugh !

But perhaps even more disgusting than the incident I have quoted is another, when, after shooting a gemsbok, he calmly writes : "My thirst was intense, and the gemsbok having a fine breast of milk, I milked her

with my mouth and obtained the sweetest beverage I ever tasted." And this was the man who prided himself on his humanity, his fine feeling, his tender sentiment! A fig for such sentiment!

But with all his sentiment Gordon Cumming had in him a strain of the canny Scot, whose keen eye for the main chance is proverbial. He did a good bit of trading with the natives, and his methods were characterised by more sharpness than honesty. He bartered muskets for ivory; and he tells us, with evident pride in his own astuteness, that he paid £16 for each case of twenty muskets, and that for each musket he demanded £30 worth of ivory, making thereby a gain of 3,000 per cent. That was bad enough, but to add lying to cheating was going a little too far. Yet he not only allowed the bamboozled natives to believe that their fifteen-shilling muskets were precisely the same kind of weapons as his own double-barrelled Purdey and Dickson, but he calmly assured them that each musket had cost "many teeth" in his own country, leaving them to infer that he was a philanthropist selling goods at a loss for the benefit of his fellow-men! From a trader's point of view this was smart, no doubt, and excusable, but it is hardly what one would expect from a sportsman and a Highland gentleman.

There were other ways, too, in which this Highland gentleman, the representative of Christianity and civilisation, "played it low down" on the ignorant, if not wholly guileless, aboriginal. Take the following as a specimen:

"The Griquas, taking advantage of the superstitions

of the Bechuanas, often practise on their credulity, and, a short time before I visited Sichely, a party of Griquas who were hunting in his territory had obtained from him several valuable karosses in barter for a little sulphur, which they represented as a most effectual medicine for guns, having assured Sichely that by rubbing a small quantity on their hands before proceeding to the field they would assuredly obtain the animal they hunted.

It happened in the course of my converse with the chief that the subject turned on ball-practice, when, probably relying on the power of his medicine, the king challenged me to shoot against him for a considerable wager, stipulating at the same time that his three brothers were to be permitted to assist him in the competition. The king staked a couple of valuable karosses against a large measure filled with my gunpowder, and we at once proceeded to the waggon, where the match was to come off, followed by a number of the tribe. Whilst Sichely was loading his gun, I repaired to the fore-chest of the waggon, where, observing that I saw watched by several of the natives, I proceeded to rub my hands with sulphur, which was instantly reported to the chief, who directly joined me, and, clapping me on the back, entreated me to give him a little of my medicine for his gun, which I, of course, told him he must purchase. Our target being set up, we commenced firing; it was a small piece of wood, six inches long by four in breadth, and was placed on the stump of a tree at the distance of one hundred

paces. Sichely fired the first shot and naturally missed it, upon which I let fly, and split it through the middle. It was then set up again when Sichely and his brothers continued firing without once touching it, till night put an end to their proceedings. This of course was attributed by all present to the power of the medicine I had used.

When Dr. Livingstone was informed of the circumstance he was very much shocked, declaring that in future the natives would fail to believe him when he denounced supernatural agency, having now seen it practised by his own countryman."

Having once started as a "medicine-man," Gordon Cumming was bound to keep up the imposture, and, indeed, he found the pious fraud a lucrative one, as the following anecdote proves :

"In the forenoon Matsaca arrived from the carcass of the *borélé*; he brought with him a very fine leopard's skin kaross, and an elephant's tooth ; these were for me, in return for which I was to cut him, to make him shoot well. This I did in the following manner : opening a large book of natural history containing prints of the commonest of the African quadrupeds, I placed his fore finger successively on several of the prints, and as I placed his finger on each I repeated some absurd sentence, and anointed him with turpentine. When this was accomplished I made four cuts in his arm with a lancet, and then anointing his wounds with gunpowder and turpentine, I told him that his gun had power over each of the animals his fingers had touched, *provided he held it straight*. Matsaca and his

retinue seemed highly gratified, and presently took leave and departed."

Strong and hardy, however, though he believed himself to be, Gordon Cumming found five years of South African hunting as much as he could stand. "The wild, free, healthy, roaming life," he writes, "had grown upon me, and I loved it more and more, but the most laborious yet noble pursuit of elephant-hunting had overtaxed my frame, and my nerves and constitution were shaken by the scorching African sun." So he left South Africa in 1849, never to return. In 1850 he published his "Five Years of a Hunter's Life in the Far Interior of South Africa," which, as I have said, was an immense success, and made him a popular hero. At the Great Exhibition of 1851 he exhibited his trophies of the chase, and crowds pressed to see these proofs of the famous "Lion-Hunter's" prowess. Then he went in for lecturing, and as that particular form of self-advertisement was a novelty then, he drew large audiences, and made much money. People flocked to see the stalwart Highland hunter in his kilt, surrounded by the skins and heads of the wild beasts he had slain. His conduct on the platform, however, was sometimes so eccentric that his audiences did not know whether to be angry or amused. And it is said that he on one occasion in London so grossly shocked and insulted the ladies that a riot nearly ensued.

In the year 1858 he opened a museum of his African trophies and curiosities at Fort Augustus in order to catch the tourists as they came up or down the Caledonian Canal. The idea, in modern phraseology, "caught on,"

and Gordon Cumming gathered in a goodly toll from the travellers who were attracted to his show. As an African hero his celebrity was eclipsed by that of David Livingstone, whose first volume, "Missionary Travels," created a great sensation when it appeared in 1857. But Gordon Cumming was able to make some capital out of his rival, too, for he had tales to tell and trophies to show of the country described in Livingstone's fascinating narrative. (And then he could point with pride to the testimony of the great missionary explorer in corroboration of his own wonderful tales. For there could no longer be any doubt that Gordon Cumming was no romancer, but a faithful narrator of facts, after this emphatic declaration of Livingstone's:

"I have no hesitation in saying that for those who love that sort of thing Mr. Cumming's book conveys a truthful idea of South African hunting. Some things in it require explanation ; but the numbers of animals said to have been met with and killed are by no means improbable, considering the amount of large game then in the country. Two other gentlemen hunting in the same region destroyed in one season no less than 78 rhinoceroses alone. In the more remote districts, where firearms have not yet been introduced, with the single exception of the rhinoceros, the game is to be found in much greater numbers than Mr. Cumming ever saw. The tsetse is, however, an insuperable barrier to hunting with horses there, and Europeans can do nothing on foot."

Gradually Roualeyn George Gordon Cumming faded

out of public recollection, for during his later years he lived a secluded life up in Fort Augustus. There was something mysterious and uncanny about this big man who roamed the hills and moors alone, with the step and bearing of a chieftain, with a strange fire burning in his eyes, and a half-rapt look of exaltation in his strongly marked face. The Highlanders believed that he had the gift of second sight, and this belief was confirmed by the circumstances surrounding his death.

One day, when he was apparently in perfect health, he went to the village carpenter and ordered his coffin. His instructions were that it was to be completed and sent up within four days. His orders were obeyed—the coffin was sent, and twenty-four hours later Roualeyn George Gordon Cumming was dead. He died from purely natural causes, but he must have had some strange premonition of his end. By a will, made on the same day on which he ordered his coffin, he left all that he possessed to his little daughter, twelve years of age. His death took place March 24th, 1866, nine days after he had completed his forty-sixth year.

It is only as a sportsman pure and simple that Gordon Cumming has any claim to be remembered. He made no pretence to be an explorer, and he added little of scientific value to our knowledge of the natural history of South Africa. But he had the qualities which go to the making of a great hunter—courage, nerve, endurance, and an adventurous spirit. There was something romantic and attractive, too, about his personality.

He gave you the idea of being a man who in an earlier age would have made his mark as a bold rover by land or sea. The story of his adventures thrilled the public of his day, and I have no doubt that many a sportsman who has since made himself a name as a slayer of big game had the desire to shake off the trammels of civilisation and taste the joys of a wild hunter's life first kindled in him by the graphic pen of Roualeyn Gordon Cumming.

Sir Humphry Davy

"JUST look at that boy! What an extraordinary face! Who is he?"

The boy in question, a lad of seventeen, was carelessly swinging on a gate, and as he swung contorted his features into grotesque grimaces which gave him the appearance of an animated gargoyle. He seemed quite unconcerned at the approach of two well-dressed gentlemen, from the younger of whom came the exclamation and query. The other made answer:

"That is young Davy, the carver's son. A queer lad—has a craze for making chemical experiments."

"Eh? What? Chemical experiments!" said the first speaker, regarding the boy with sudden interest. "I must go and have a talk with him."

And that was how Gilbert Giddy Davies and Humphry Davy, two future Presidents of the Royal Society, first became acquainted.

Davies (or Giddy, as he then was, for he did not take the name of Davies till some years later) was at that time eight-and-twenty years of age, an Oxford Master of Arts already known in literary and scientific circles,



SIR HUMPHRY DAVY.

and a man of wealth to boot, with a fine estate in Cornwall, where he was residing when he thus fell in with Humphry Davy. He soon discovered that the extraordinary-looking boy swinging on the gate was a genius in the rough, and offered him the use of his library, with any other assistance in his chemical studies of which the lad might care to avail himself. Young Humphry jumped at the offer, which squared exactly with his desires, and from that moment was started on the career which led him to fame and fortune.

Hitherto no one had understood the boy or given him credit for the possession of any talents likely to be of the least use in getting him on in the world. His father, Robert Davy, was a wood-carver, but followed that occupation rather for amusement than profit, for he had sufficient patrimony to support himself and his family in modest comfort. The Davys had been established in Cornwall as far back as the commencement of the seventeenth century, and Robert Davy could point with pride to monuments of his ancestors in Ludgvan Church bearing the date of 1635.

Humphry was born at Penzance on December 17th, 1778. If his parents had not been unusually dull they should have discovered that the boy was something quite out of the common. His memory at the age of five was phenomenal. He could master the contents of a book by merely turning over the leaves rapidly, and knew almost by heart what one of his biographers Dr. Paris, calls "that pleasing work, 'The Pilgrim's Progress.'" But it was as a teller of romantic tales that he chiefly excelled. He would get a circle of boys,

many of them far older than himself, round him, and keep them fascinated by his wonderful powers as a *raconteur*. Above all, he was a born sportsman, and his proficiency as a fisherman when he was yet in his teens excited the amazement and envy of his school-fellows.

"I have known him," says one of his boyish friends, "catch grey mullet at Penzance Pier when none of us could succeed. The mullet is a very difficult fish to hook, on account of the diminutive size of its mouth ; but Davy adopted a plan of his own contrivance. Observing that they always swam in shoals, he attached a succession of pilchards to a string, reaching from the surface to the bottom of the sea, and while his prey were swimming around the bait, he would by a sudden movement of the string entangle several of them on the hooks and thus dexterously capture them."

As soon, however, as he was old enough to handle a gun, shooting rivalled fishing in his affections. Before he was fourteen he had made a collection of rare birds, all shot and stuffed by himself. The marshes around Penzance abounded with snipe, and woodcock were plentiful in the coverts. No licence was required for shooting them, so young Humphry had rare sport of a kind which, in the opinion of many good sportsmen, has no superior. Accompanied by his favourite water-spaniel Chloe, the wood-carver's son, with his gun on his shoulder, was a familiar figure to the people of Penzance, who never dreamed that a youth so devoted to the pleasures of rod and gun could ever develop into a man with any serious pursuits. Nor did his

schoolmasters discern any sign of the real bent of his mind.

He was sent first to Coryton's Grammar School at Penzance, where he had the reputation of being an idle boy, with a gift for making verses, but with no aptitude for studies of a graver sort. Fortunately his headmaster was of an easy disposition—not an Orbilius or a Keate—and the boy was not cruelly driven and beaten into grinding at tasks for which he had no taste.

"After all," said Sir Humphry in later life, "the way in which we are taught Latin and Greek does not much influence the important structure of our minds. I consider it fortunate that I was left much to myself as a child, and put upon no particular plan of study, and that I enjoyed much idleness at Mr. Coryton's school. I perhaps owe to these circumstances the little talents I have, and their peculiar application: what I am I have made myself. I say this without vanity, and in pure simplicity of heart."

His progress at Coryton's school, however, did not satisfy his parents, and he was sent to Truro. There he was more successful, though his headmaster, the Rev. Dr. Carden, subsequently stated: "I could not discover the faculties by which he was afterwards so much distinguished. I discovered, indeed, his taste for poetry, which I did not omit to encourage."

And without doubt Humphry Davy had considerable poetical gifts. At the age of twelve he wrote an epic entitled "The Tyndidiad," the subject of which was the adventures of Diomed on his return from the Trojan war. "It is much to be regretted," says Dr.

Paris, "that not even a fragment of this poem should have been preserved." I do not share in Dr. Paris's regret, nor can I agree with that worthy person when he says of other verses of Davy's which *have* been preserved, that "although marked by the common faults of youthful poets, they still bear the *stamp of lofty genius*"! Fluent, graceful, eloquent, Davy's verse often is, but it wholly lacks distinction and originality, or any striking quality which at all merits Sir Walter Scott's encomium: "If Davy had not been the first Chemist, he would have been the first Poet of his age"; or Lockhart's: "He was a true poet, and might have been one of the greatest of poets, had he chosen." And yet these were men who were poets themselves, and knew what good poetry was. But then they were friends of Humphry Davy—they were under the spell of his attractive personality; and contemporary criticism thus biassed seldom stands the test of time.

After leaving school, at the age of seventeen, Humphry was apprenticed to a surgeon, Mr. John Borlase, of Penzance. Then he began to dabble in chemistry, in which pursuit his eldest sister was his enthusiastic assistant, regardless of the ruin wrought in her dresses by contact with corrosive acids. A garret in the house of a neighbour and friend, Mr. Tonkin, was his laboratory, and the awful smells and explosions which came from thence were a source of terror to his friends. "This boy Humphry is incorrigible," said Mr. Tonkin. "Was there ever so idle a dog? He will blow us all into the air some of these days."

It was at this moment, whilst he was making his

first crude experiments in chemistry, that Gilbert Giddy came across his path, and turned his genius into its proper channel. For not only did Giddy place his own library and chemical apparatus at the disposal of the young student, but he introduced him to Dr. Edwards, chemical lecturer at Bartholomew's Hospital, and to Dr. Beddoes, who had just established at Clifton a pneumatic medical institution for the purpose of trying the medicinal effects of different gases. In the autumn of 1798 Dr. Beddoes engaged Humphry Davy as superintendent of this establishment, and the young chemist was thus placed in a position in which he could pursue unhampered the studies most congenial to him. "I never loved to *imitate*, but always to *invent*," he told a friend in after life. And this inventive quality helped him marvellously in that career of discovery which made his name illustrious. Before he had been twelve months at Clifton he made himself famous by discovering the intoxicating effects of nitrous oxide when respired, and thus gave medical science the valuable anæsthetic known as "laughing-gas." In the ardour with which he pursued the investigations which led to his discoveries he knew no fear of consequences, and more than once almost sacrificed his life in his experiments. Indeed, his fearlessness had been conspicuous from his boyhood. When he was sixteen he was bitten in the leg by a dog supposed to be mad; he coolly pulled out his knife, cut out the piece of flesh, and then went to the surgery and cauterised it himself. He used to say that he had educated himself to a disbelief in the existence of pain

whenever the energies of his mind were directed to counteract it. He had been enunciating this doctrine once to a friend whilst they were out sea-fishing. "But," writes the said friend, "I very shortly afterwards had an opportunity of witnessing a practical refutation of this doctrine in his own person, for upon being bitten by a conger-eel, my young friend Humphry roared out most lustily." Humphry, however, might fairly have urged in his defence the fact that "the energies of his mind" were not at the moment "directed to counteract it."

The fame of the young Cornish genius spread to London, and when he had only just entered his twenty-third year he was appointed Assistant Lecturer and Director of the Laboratory to the Royal Institution. As a lecturer he at once met with extraordinary success. His subject, Experimental Chemistry, had the charm of novelty. There was a freshness and a fascination about these revelations of the mysteries of Nature which made them irresistibly attractive to the half-enlightened, semi-superstitious curiosity of Society in general, as well as to genuine searchers after truth. The young lecturer became the lion of fashionable London. Men of the first rank and talent—the literary and the scientific, the practical and the theoretical—blue-stockings and women of fashion, the old and the young, all crowded, eagerly crowded, the lecture-room. His youth, his simplicity, his natural eloquence, his chemical knowledge, his happy illustrations and well-conducted experiments, excited universal attention and unbounded applause. Compliments, invitations, and presents were

showered upon him in abundance from all quarters; his society was courted by all, and all appeared proud of his acquaintance.

"Such was his great celebrity at this period of his career," writes Dr. Paris, "that persons of the highest rank contended for the honour of his company at dinner, and he did not possess sufficient resolution to resist the gratification thus afforded, although it generally happened that his pursuits in the laboratory were not suspended until the appointed dinner-hour had passed. On his return in the evening, he resumed his chemical labours, and commonly continued them until three or four o'clock in the morning; and yet the servants of the establishment not unfrequently found that he had risen before them. The greatest of all his wants was Time, and the expedients by which he economised it often placed him in very ridiculous positions, and gave rise to habits of the most eccentric description: driven to an extremity, he would in his haste put on fresh linen, without removing that which was underneath; and, singular as the fact may appear, he has been known, after the fashion of the grave-digger in Hamlet, to wear no less than five shirts, and as many pairs of stockings at the same time. Exclamations of surprise very frequently escaped from his friends at the rapid manner in which he increased and declined in corpulence."

A similar story is told of the late Dr. Joseph Wolff, whose heroic expedition to Bokhara to ascertain the fate of Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly, in 1844, made him famous. I was in the house at which Dr.

Wolff was staying at the time, and can vouch for the truth of the story. The great Oriental traveller and linguist was as helpless as a child in all the ordinary affairs of life. He could not dress himself without assistance, and at table had to have his food cut up for him. He was particularly careless, too, about his personal appearance, and his wife had strictly enjoined him to be sure and put on a clean shirt every day. He followed her injunctions literally, and at the end of a week was wearing six shirts, one over the other !

But amid all this whirl of excitement and popularity there was one thing which kept Humphry Davy from becoming the "spoiled darling" of Society, and that was his love of sport. He turned for rest and recreation to his beloved rod and gun. By the side of the trout-stream or among the stubble and heather he shook off the trammels of artificial life and came face to face with Nature.

His brother John, who was not only eminent as a physiologist and anatomist, but was a great fisherman to boot, and the author of two delightful books on angling, says :

"It was not unusual for him to go two or three hundred miles for a day's fishing. . . . Passionately fond of the beauties of Nature, which he felt as a poet and saw as a philosopher, probably the happiest hours of his life were spent by the river or lake side, or on the mountain moor. In the open air, in the country, at any season of the year, but more especially in spring or autumn, when in tolerable health, he could always (and sometimes even when labouring

under disease) throw off his cares, and rid his mind of all annoying thoughts. There he recovered the hilarity natural to his disposition, and appeared in his true character, most cheerful, amiable, and entertaining, and the delight of his friends. They, indeed, I will now say, were almost his only true friends who were his associates in these sports ; and they perhaps were almost the only persons who knew him thoroughly and truly."

But in his angling, as in everything else, Humphry Davy was nothing if not original. Dr. Paris gives the following amusing picture of the philosopher in his fishing costume :

"His whole suit consisted of green cloth ; the coat having sundry pockets for holding the necessary tackle : his boots were made of caoutchouc, and, for the convenience of wading through the water, reached above the knees. His hat, originally intended for a coal-heaver, had been purchased from the manufacturer in its raw state, and dyed green by some pigment of his own composition ; it was, moreover, studded with every variety of artificial fly which he could require for his diversion. Thus equipped, he thought, from the colour of his dress, that he was more likely to elude the observation of the fish. He looked not like an inhabitant o' the earth, and yet was on't ;—nor can I find any object in the regions of invention with which I could justly compare him, except perhaps one of those grotesque personages who, in the farce of 'The Critic,' attend Father Thames on the stage as his two banks.

I shall take this opportunity of stating that his shooting attire was equally whimsical : if, as an angler,

he adopted a dress for concealing his person, as a sportsman in woods and plantations, it was his object to devise means for exposing it ; for he always entertained a singular dread lest he might be shot upon these occasions. When upon a visit to Mr. Dillwyn, of Swansea, he accompanied his friend on a shooting excursion, in a broad-brimmed hat, the whole of which, with the exception of the brim, was covered with scarlet cloth."

Dr. Paris, who was no angler, expresses the opinion that Davy was not more successful than other anglers ; but John Davy, who was one of the best fishermen of his day, pays this tribute to his brother's skill in the "gentle craft":

"He was a better angler than he was a fowler ; indeed he was the most successful angler I ever knew. He threw the fly with great delicacy and dexterity, and had a tact and knowledge which made him very superior to the common angler, however much practised. Salmon fishing he was very successful in ; but I believe he was most successful in trout fishing, in which he had most experience. His tackle was curious and elaborate ; he seemed to have had a pleasure in collecting the gay materials necessary for dressing flies, though he seldom used them himself, excepting on emergency, having been always too much occupied to have had leisure to apply himself much to fly-making, an art in which it is impossible to attain tolerable skill without much practice."

Both Dr. Paris and John Davy agree in crediting Humphry with the display of the same extraordinary

energy and zeal in fishing which he showed in everything else he undertook, but on other points they differ. Paris asserts that Humphry Davy's temperament was too mercurial; "the fish never seized the fly with sufficient avidity to fulfil his expectations, or to support that degree of excitement which was essential to his happiness, and he became either listless or angry, and consequently careless and unsuccessful." John Davy, on the other hand, says that his brother's patience and perseverance were as remarkable as his energy and zeal. "I remember," he writes, "fishing with him from early dawn to twilight in the river Awe in June, for salmon, with little interruption, without raising a fish."

Humphry's passion for angling betrayed itself upon all occasions; and the sport was alike his relief in toil and his solace in sorrow.

"Whenever," writes Dr. Paris, "I had the honour of dining at his table, the conversation, however it might have commenced, invariably ended on fishing; and when a brother of the angle happened to be present you had the pleasure of hearing all his encounters with the finny tribe—how he had lured them by his treachery and vanquished them by his perseverance. He would occasionally strike into a most eloquent and impassioned strain upon some subject which warmed his fancy; such, for example, as the beauties of mountain scenery; but before you could fully enjoy the prospect which his imagination had pictured, down he carried you into some sparkling stream or rapid current, to flounder for the next half-hour with a hooked salmon!

I remember witnessing, upon one of these occasions, a very amusing scene, which may be related as illustrative of some peculiarities of his temper. I believe all those who have accompanied Davy in his fishing excursions, will allow that no sportsman was ever more ambitious to appear skilful and lucky. Nothing irritated him so much as to find that his companions had caught more fish than himself; and if, during conversation, a brother fisherman surpassed him in the relation of his success, he betrayed similar impatience.

There happened to be present on the occasion to which I allude, a skilful angler, and an enterprising chemist. The latter commenced on some subject connected with his favourite science; but Davy, who generally speaking, disliked to make it a subject of conversation, suddenly turned to the angler, and related what he considered a very surprising instance of his success: his sporting friend, however, mortified him by the relation of a still more marvellous anecdote; upon which Davy as quickly returned to the chemist, who, in turn, again sent him back to the angler:—and thus did he appear to endure the unhappy fate of the *flying fish*, who no sooner escapes from an enemy in the regions of air, than he is pursued by one equally rapacious in the waters."

Meanwhile honours had been falling fast and thick upon the brilliant young chemist. He had been elected a Fellow of the Royal Society at the age of four-and-twenty, the Institute of France had awarded him the First Consul's Prize of 3,000 francs for "the experiment most conducive to the progress of science,"

the University of Dublin had conferred upon him the honorary degree of LL.D., besides paying him 1,300 guineas for two courses of lectures, and finally, in 1812, he received the honour of knighthood from the Prince Regent. On the day after he was knighted Sir Humphry Davy delivered his farewell lecture at the Royal Institution to an audience which crowded the theatre in every part and included the cream of London's intellect, beauty, and rank. Three days later he was married to Mrs. Apreece, daughter and heiress of Charles Keen, of Kelso, who had made a large fortune as a sugar-planter in Antigua. As Lady Davy not only exercised a great influence over her husband, but was herself a person of considerable note, I may be excused for giving some particulars about her.

Her first husband was Shuckburgh Ashby Apreece, eldest son of the well-known Welsh baronet Sir Thomas Hussey Apreece, one of the finest sportsmen in the kingdom. His death left her a young and wealthy widow. She made Edinburgh her home, and her house soon became a centre of all that was brightest and cleverest in the "Modern Athens." A bewitching little woman she was, with her petite figure, sparkling black eyes, glossy black hair, vivacious manners, and lively talk. The sweet smile with which she knew how to light up her pleasant face was more than any man could withstand. Sir Walter Scott and Sydney Smith both acknowledged its subtle power and confessed themselves her slaves. Under the spell of that smile a venerable professor of the University knelt down in Prince's Street

in broad daylight to fasten up her boot-laces! Fresh from the Continent, with the distinction of Madame de Staël's friendship, and invested with a halo of romantic interest as the alleged original of "Corinne," Mrs. Apreece enjoyed a popularity greater even than Alison Cockburn's or Bess Burnet's. Suitors, of course, the rich and fascinating young widow had in plenty, but none was favoured until she came up to London, to spend the season at her mother's house in Portland Place, and met Humphry Davy, then at the zenith of his fame.

To carry off from all other rivals the lion of London Society, the man whose intellect commanded the homage of the *beaux esprits* of both sexes, was a triumph worthy of any woman's ambition. And then the brilliant experimentalist and eloquent expositor of science was a man of most attractive personality. In his earlier days, indeed, Humphry Davy was something uncouth in his appearance, round-shouldered, lumpish, and bucolic. But contact with good society soon put a polish upon the rustic Cornish lad. "The change," says Dr. Paris, in his grandiose style, "which his appearance underwent after his introduction to the Royal Institution was so rapid that in the days of Herodotus it would have been attributed to nothing less than the miraculous interposition of the Priestesses of Helen." He was not tall—5 feet 7 inches was his height—but his figure was singularly well-proportioned and his carriage was erect. His hands and feet were remarkably small, but his chest was broad and full, and his limbs extremely muscular. His compact, well-

knit frame was capable of both great exertion and great endurance. But probably what attracted women most was his glossy, silken, curly, light brown hair and his fine, expressive, hazel eyes. He had probably as many admirers among women as Mrs. Apreece had among men, and his capture by that dashing brunette doubtless made her an object of fierce jealousy to her own sex.

I doubt whether it was a happy marriage. Lady Davy was a restless creature. Her physical activity was extraordinary, her tongue was never still, except when she slept, and charming as her sprightly conversation no doubt was to outsiders, it is possible that her husband found it a trifle wearisome. She was never happy unless she was hurrying him about from place to place.

And then, like all brunettes, she had a temper. Poor Faraday found this out to his cost when, as Sir Humphry's assistant, he accompanied the pair to France in 1813. There was war between the two countries, but Napoleon gave Sir Humphry Davy permission to visit Paris and travel through the provinces in the interests of science. During this tour Lady Davy snubbed and persecuted Faraday with a vindictive spite which showed the real littleness of her nature. "Her temper," says her long-suffering victim, "made it often go wrong with me, with herself, and with Sir Humphry."

But Davy, fortunately, always had his rod and gun to fall back upon, and in the pursuit of the sports he loved could forget even the tongue and temper of his charming wife. It was the gun, however, that was now most in

favour, though for a long while he had discarded it for the more contemplative pastime. Possibly Lady Davy had inoculated him with her own restlessness, and so unfitted him, temporarily, for the full enjoyment of the peace fullest of all pleasures. His brother John says :

“ From his boyhood he had been a lover of the angle, and he was hardly less fond of fowling, for which sport also he had acquired a taste early in life. At no time of his life did he relinquish angling, except at the commencement of his public career, whilst he was at Clifton, and the first year or two he was in London, when all his faculties were strained in the pursuit of science under the impulse of a lofty ambition, and an intense desire of distinguishing himself, extending the boundaries of human knowledge, and benefiting mankind. When he resumed angling, he pursued it, I may say, passionately for some years, and never used his gun. The time, however, arrived, I think it was soon after his marriage, that he seemed to prefer his gun to his rod ; and probably the reason for this was that he was much in the country in the autumn, and followed fishing and shooting more than formerly for amusement, and less as a mere relaxation from his scientific labours. Latterly, it is difficult to say which he preferred ; the preference, I believe, was very much decided by the *kind* of sport ; the *salmo lucho* of the branches of the Danube, in Southern Austria, and the double snipe in the marshes of Rome and Ravenna, Laybach and Altona, would be to him almost equally attractive. By connecting both sports with natural history, he gave them a degree of import-

ance and interest not their own, and made them, as it were, rational. His note-books show this very remarkably; they contain not merely the minutes of his day's sport, but also the results of his observations for the purposes of distinguishing species and identifying them, and of ascertaining their routes in migration, their peculiar diets and habits."

In the year 1815 the attention of Sir Humphry Davy was directed towards devising a remedy against the frequent explosions of fire damp in coal-mines, attended as they usually were by fearful loss of life. The result of his investigations was the invention of the Safety Lamp—a cage of wire-gauze, which by its cooling action prevents the flame from igniting the explosive atmosphere exterior to the lamp, even though the flame reach as far as the gauze. It is as the inventor of the safety lamp that Sir Humphry is now best known, just as another eminent chemist, Justus von Liebig, owes his fame among the multitude to what he, too, probably thought the least of all his discoveries—the familiar extract of meat. The grateful coal-owners presented the inventor of the safety lamp with a magnificent service of plate which cost nearly £2,000, and the Crown rewarded him with a baronetcy.

During the latter portion of his life his devotion to sport was at least as fervent as his devotion to science. As the guest of the Duke of Sutherland at Dunrobin Castle he enjoyed some of the best salmon-fishing and grouse-shooting in Scotland. Now and then, too, the hospitable laird of Abbotsford showed him excellent sport, for there was no keener sportsman

breathing than the great "Wizard of the North." Lockhart, in his *Life of Scott*, gives us a delightful glimpse of Sir Humphry Davy as the guest of Sir Walter. Scott had planned a great coursing match at Newark Hill, and had marshalled a motley cavalcade of ladies and gentlemen to partake in the day's sport. After describing those who were present, Lockhart proceeds :

"But the most picturesque figure was the illustrious inventor of the safety lamp. He had come for his favourite sport of angling, and had been practising it successfully with Rose, his travelling companion, for two or three days preceding this, but he had not prepared for coursing fields, or had left Charlie Purdie's troop for Sir Walter's on a sudden thought ; and his fisherman's costume—a brown hat with flexible brims, surrounded with line upon line, and innumerable fly-hooks—jack boots worthy of a Dutch smuggler, and a fustian surtout dabbled with the blood of salmon, made a fine contrast with the smart jackets, white cord breeches, and well polished jockey boots of the less distinguished cavaliers about him."

Sir Humphry entered as zealously as any one of them into the sport ; but his zeal outran his discretion, and he was the victim of a ludicrous accident which Lockhart thus describes :

"Coursing on such a mountain is not like the same sport over a set of fine English pastures. There were gulfs to be avoided and bogs to be threaded—many a stiff nag stuck fast—many a bold rider measured his length among the peat-hags, and another stranger to

the ground besides Davy plunged neck deep into a treacherous well-head, which till they were floundering in it, had borne all the appearance of a piece of delicate green turf. When Sir Humphry emerged from his involuntary bath, his habiliments garnished with mud, slime, and mangled water-cresses, Sir Walter received him with a triumphant *encore*! But the philosopher had his revenge, for joining soon afterwards in a brisk gallop, Scott put Sibyl Grey to a leap beyond her prowess, and lay humbled in the ditch, while Davy who was better mounted, cleared it and him at a bound. Happily there was but little damage done—but no one was sorry that the sociable had been detained at the foot of the hill.

I have seen Sir Humphry in many places, and in company of many different descriptions; but never to such advantage as at Abbotsford. His host and he delighted in each other, and the modesty of their mutual admiration was a memorable spectacle. Davy was by nature a poet—and Scott, though anything but a philosopher in the modern sense of that term, might, I think it very likely, have pursued the study of physical science with zeal and success if he had happened to fall in with such an instructor as Sir Humphry would have been to him, in his early life. Each strove to make the other talk—and they did so in turn more charmingly than I ever heard either on any other occasion whatsoever. Scott in his romantic narratives touched a deeper chord of feeling than usual, when he had such a listener as Davy; and Davy, when induced to open his views upon any question of scientific

interest in Scott's presence, did so with a degree of clear energetic eloquence, and with a flow of imagery and illustration, of which neither his habitual tone of table-talk (least of all in London), nor any of his prose writings (except, indeed the posthumous 'Consolations of Travel') could suggest an adequate notion. I say his prose writings—for who that has read his sublime quatrains on the doctrine of Spinoza can doubt that he might have united, if he had pleased, in some great didactic poem, the vigorous ratiocination of Dryden, and the moral majesty of Wordsworth? I remember William Laidlaw whispering to me, one night, when their 'rapt talk' had kept the circle round the fire long after the usual bedtime of Abbotsford—'Gude preserve us! this is a very superior occasion! Eh, sirs!' he added, cocking his eye like a bird, 'I wonder if Shakspeare and Bacon ever met to screw ilk other up?'"

In 1820 Sir Humphry Davy was elected President of the Royal Society, and held that distinguished post till 1827, when, owing to failing health, he resigned. He then devoted himself to travel and sport on the Continent; wherever he went he fished, and his letters and diaries bear witness to his unabated enthusiasm for angling and his minute study of the habits and varieties of the fish inhabiting the different rivers and lakes which he visited, with particulars of the flies and artificial baits which he found most successful in each case.

It was at this time, during (to quote his own words) "some months of severe and dangerous illness, when

he was wholly incapable of following more serious pursuits," that Sir Humphry Davy occupied himself in writing "Salmonia; or, Days of Fly-fishing," the work on which his fame as a fisherman rests. It was unfortunate that the author should have adopted the dialogue form and shaped his book on lines similar to those of "The Compleat Angler," for the resemblance provokes comparison and suggests imitation. Yet beyond the form there is no attempt at imitation; and as a treatise on angling "Salmonia" is so immeasurably superior to old Izaak's immortal classic that to compare the two is ridiculous—they are not in this respect to be named in the same breath. But as a piece of literature, eloquent and poetical as "Salmonia" often is, it cannot bear comparison with "The Compleat Angler." The subtle charm, the sweet simplicity, the living, breathing freshness, the racy redolence of Nature which have made the London linen-draper's homely volume a joy for ever to all who love true literature—all these are lacking in Sir Humphry Davy's pages. He moves in a higher and more ambitious sphere. Instead of the quiet meadows, with the slow stream winding leisurely through them and the cattle resting placidly under the willows, the rustic ale-house, with honey-suckle and sweet-briar climbing in at the windows, the comely hostess, the cleanly rooms, the lavender-scented sheets, we have purple and fine linen, elegant villas, lordly castles romantic scenery, and grand society. Instead of the humble chub "dressed so admirably as to equal trout," and washed down with a modest cup of home-brewed ale, we have viands that would have made the mouths,

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of Lucullus and Apicius water, and wines over which the Prince Regent and "Old Q." would have smacked their lips. And then the sport! How can one condescend even distantly to hint at the contents of poor Izaak's humble creel in the presence of philosophers whose quarry is the King of Fish, the Royal Salmon!

The characters in "Salmonia" are four in number: *Haliaeus*, an accomplished fly-fisher; *Ornither*, who is "fond of field sports, but not a finished angler"; *Poietes*, "an enthusiastic lover of Nature, partially acquainted with the mysteries of fly-fishing"; *Physicus*, "uninitiated as an angler, but a person fond of inquiries in natural history and philosophy."

I shall best convey an idea of the sort of conversation in which the quartet indulge by a few extracts. *Haliaeus*, referring to Byron's libel on Izaak Walton remarks:

"And if you require a poetical authority against that of Lord Byron, I mention the philosophical poet of the lakes, and the author of

An Orphic tale, indeed
A tale divine, of high and passionate thoughts,
To their own music chanted;

who is a lover both of fly-fishing and fly-fishermen—Gay's poem you know, and his passionate fondness for the amusement, which was his principal occupation in the summer at Amesbury; and the late excellent John Tobin, author of the *Honey-Moon*, was an ardent angler.

Phys. I am satisfied with your poetical authorities.

Hal. Nay, I can find authorities of all kinds—statesmen, heroes and philosophers. I can go back to Trajan who was fond of angling. Nelson was a good fly-fisher, and as a proof of his passion for it, continued the pursuit even with his left hand. Dr. Paley was ardently attached to this amusement; so much so that when the Bishop of Durham inquired of him when one of his most important works would be finished, he said with great simplicity and good humour, ‘My Lord, I shall work steadily at it when the fly-fishing season is over. As if this were a business of his life.’

Sir Walter Scott, in his picturesque and entertaining article on “Salmonia” in the *Quarterly Review*, appends this interesting note to his comments on the passage I have quoted :

“The author of ‘Salmonia’ mentions Nelson’s fondness for fly-fishing, and expresses a wish to see it noticed in the next edition of ‘that most exquisite and touching life of our Hero by the Laureate, an immortal monument raised by genius to valour.’ We believe neither Halicæus nor the Laureate will be displeased with the following little anecdote from a letter of a gentleman now at the head of the medical profession with which he favoured us shortly after perusing ‘Salmonia’: ‘I was’ (says our friend) ‘at the Naval Hospital at Yarmouth, on the morning when Nelson, after the battle of Copenhagen (having sent the wounded before him), arrived at the Roads, and landed on the jutty. The populace soon surrounded him, and the military were drawn up in the market-place ready to receive him; but, making his way through the

crowd, and the dust, and the clamour, he went straight to the hospital. I went round the wards with him, and was much interested in observing his demeanour to the sailors; he stopped at every bed, and to every man he had something kind and cheery to say. At length he stopped opposite a bed on which a sailor was lying, who had lost his right arm close to the shoulder-joint, and the following short dialogue passed between them :
Nelson. "Well, Jack, what's the matter with you?"
Sailor. "Lost my right arm, your honour." Nelson paused, looked down at his own empty sleeve, then at the sailor, and said playfully, "Well, Jack, then you and I are spoiled for fishermen,—cheer up, my brave fellow." And he passed briskly on to the next bed; but these few words had a magical effect upon the poor fellow, for I saw his eyes sparkle with delight as Nelson turned away and pursued his course through the wards. As this was the only occasion on which I saw Nelson, I may, perhaps, overrate the value of the incident.'"

Every angler knows the bitter anguish of losing a big fish, and his conviction that the fish so lost was the biggest he ever hooked. It is said that Swift never to the end of his life forgot the pang of losing a great trout when he was a boy. But it may be some solace to those who have thus suffered to learn, on the unimpeachable authority of Halicæus, that the fish thus lost are never really as big as the chagrined angler imagines.

Physicus has been bewailing the loss of a very large fish which he had hooked, and dilates mournfully on its

enormous proportions, when he is thus "taken down" by that very superior person Halicæus:

"*Hal.* I daresay he was a large fish; but I have known very correct and even cool reasoners in error on a point of this kind. You are acquainted with Chemicus; he is not an ardent fisherman, and certainly not addicted to romance: I will tell you an anecdote respecting him. He accompanied me to this very spot last year, on a visit to our host, and preferred angling for pike to fly-fishing. After the amusement of a morning he brought back with him to the house one pike, and with some degree of disappointment complained that he had hooked another of enormous size, which carried off his tackle by main force, and which he was sure must have been above 10 lbs. At dinner, on the table there were two pikes; one the fish that Chemicus had caught, and another a little larger, somewhat more than 3 lbs. We put some questions who had caught this second pike, which we found had been taken by our host, who, with some kind of mystery, asked Chemicus if he thought it weighed 10 lbs. Chemicus refused to acknowledge an identity between such a fish and the monster he had hooked; when my friend took out of his pocket a paper containing some hooks and tackle carefully wrapped up, and asked Chemicus if he had ever seen such an apparatus. Chemicus owned they were the hooks and tackle the great fish had carried away. 'And I found them,' said our host, 'in the mouth of that little fish which you see on the table, and which I caught half an hour ago.'"

But the excruciatingly well-informed Halicæus not only knows how to catch his salmon but how to cook him. Listen to the oracle as he finishes playing a 15-lb. fish :

"*Hal.* He seems fairly tired : I shall bring him in to shore. Now gaff him ; strike as near the tail as you can. He is safe ; we must prepare him for the pot. Give him a stunning blow on the head to deprive him of sensation, and then make a transverse cut just below the gills, and crimp him, by cutting to the bone on each side so as almost to divide him into slices : and now hold him by the tail, that he may bleed. There is a small spring, I see, close under that bank, which I daresay has the mean temperature of the atmosphere in this climate, and is much under 50°—place him there and let him remain for ten minutes ; then carry him to the pot, and before you put in a slice let the water and salt boil furiously, and give time to the water to recover its heat before you throw in another ; and so proceed with the whole fish : leave the head out, and throw in the thickest pieces first."

There Halicæus is right, and no one who has not tasted a salmon thus cooked within half an hour of his capture really knows what is the true flavour of the King of Fish.

In the following extract Halicæus is seen as the somewhat pedantic but withal sensible expert coaching the tyro Poietes in the art of throwing a fly, and landing a fish after striking him :

"*Hal.* You have, I am sure, gentlemen, dined well ;

no one ever dined otherwise in this house. It is a beautiful calm evening, and many fish might be caught where we fished in the morning; but I will take you to another part of the river; you shall each catch a fish, and then we will give over; for the evening's sport should be kept till a late season,—July or August,—when there is little fly on in the day-time: and it would be spoiling the diversion of our host, to catch or prick all the fish in the upper water; and with a gentleman so truly liberal, and so profuse of his means of giving pleasure to others, no improper liberties should be taken. I shall not fish myself, but shall have my pleasure in witnessing your sport. It must be in a boat, and you must steal slowly up the calm water, and glide like aerial beings on the surface, making no motion in the water, and showing no shadow. Your fly must be an orange or brown palmer with a yellow body; for the gray drake is not yet on the water. The fish here are large, and the river weedy, so you must take care of your fish and your tackle.

Poiet. We have at least passed over half a mile of water, and have seen no fish rise; yet there is a yellowish or reddish fly in the air, which moves like a drake; and there are clouds of pale brown flies encircling the alders. Now, I think I see a large trout rise below that alder.

Hal. That is not a trout, for he rises in a different place now, and is probably a large roach or chub; do not waste your time upon him. You may always know a large trout, when feeding in the evening. He rises

continuously, or at small intervals, in a still water, almost always in the same place—and makes little noise—barely elevating his mouth to suck in the fly, and sometimes showing his back-fin and tail. A large circle spreads around him ; but there are seldom any bubbles when he breaks the water, which usually indicate the coarser fish. We will wait a few minutes ; I know there must be trout here ; and the sun is setting, and the yellow fly, or dun cut, coming on the water. See, beneath that alder, is a trout rising ; and now there is another thirty yards higher up. Take care, get your line out in another part of the water, and in order for reaching the fish, and do not throw till you are sure you can reach the spot, and throw at least half a yard above the spot.

Orn. He rose, I suppose, at a natural fly, the moment my fly touched the water.

Hal. Try again. You have hooked him ; and you have done well not to strike when he rose. Now hold him tight, wind up your line, and carry him down the stream. Push the boat down stream, fisherman. Keep your fish's head up. He begins to tire,—and there, he is landed. A fine well-fed fish, not much less than four pounds. Throw him into the well. Now, Poietes, try that fish rising above,—and there are two more.

Poiet. I have him !

Hal. Take care. He has turned you, and you have suffered him to run out your line, and he is gone into the weeds under the willow : let him fall down stream.

Poiet. I cannot get him out.

Hal. Then wind up. I fear he is lost ; yet we will

try to recover him by taking the boat up. The line is loose : he has left the link entangled in the weeds, and carried your fly with him. He must have been a large fish, or he could not have disentangled himself from so strong a gut. Try again, there are fish now rising above and below ; where the water is in motion, opposite that willow, there are two fish rising.

Poiet. I have one of them.

Hal. Now you are doing well. Down with the boat, and drag your fish downwards. Continue to do so, as there are weeds all round you. You can master him now ; keep him high, and he is your own. Put the net under him, and bring him into the boat ; he is a well-fed fish ; but not of the proper size for a victim : about 2 lbs. Now, Physicus, try your fortune with the fish above, that rises still. You have him ! Now use him as Poietes did the last. Very well ; he is a large fish—take your time. He is landed. A fish nearly of 3 lbs., and in excellent season.

Phys. Anche Io son Pescatore—I too am a fisherman—a triumph."

On reading that passage the uninitiated greenhorn might imagine that catching big trout is as easy as shelling peas. But let him not be deceived. Had Sir Humphry chosen to tell the whole truth, which no angler ever does, he would have confessed that he envied his own puppets the luck with which they took their fish just when they pleased.

Sometimes, however, the superior *Halieus* is himself called over the coals, as in the following instance :

“Hal. When a boy, I have felt an interest in sea-fishing, for this reason—that there was a variety of fish; but the want of skill in the amusement—sinking a bait with a lead, and pulling up a fish by main force, soon made me tired of it. Since I have been a fly-fisher, I have rarely fished in the sea, and then only with a reel and fine tackle from the rocks, which is at least as interesting an amusement as that of the Cockney fishermen who fish for roach and dace in the Thames, which I have tried twice in my life, but shall never try again.

Phys. You are severe on Cockney fishermen, and I suppose would apply to *them only*, the observation of Dr. Johnson, which on a former occasion you would not allow to be just: ‘Angling is an amusement with a stick and a string; a worm at one end, and a fool at the other.’ And then to yourself you would apply it with this change: ‘A fly at one end and a philosopher at the other.’ Yet the pleasure of the Cockney angler appears to me of much the same kind, and perhaps more continuous than yours; and he has the happiness of constant occupation and perpetual pursuit in as high a degree as you have; and if we were to look at the real foundations of your pleasure, we should find them, like most of the foundations of human happiness—vanity or folly. I shall never forget the impression made upon me some years ago, when I was standing on the pier at Donegal, watching the flowing of the tide: I saw a lame boy of fourteen or fifteen years old, very slightly clad, that some persons were attempting to stop in his progress along the pier; but he

resisted them with his crutches, and halting along, threw himself from an elevation of five or six feet, with his crutches and a little parcel of wooden boats that he carried under his arm, on the sand of the beach. He had to scramble at least 100 yards over hard rocks, before he reached the water, and he several times fell down and cut his naked limbs on the bare stones. Being in the water, he seemed in an ecstasy, and immediately put his boats in sailing order, and was perfectly inattentive to the counsel and warning of the spectators, who shouted to him that he would be drowned. His whole attention was absorbed by his boats. He had formed an idea that one should outsail the rest, and when this boat was foremost he was in delight; but if any one of the others got beyond it, he howled with grief; and once I saw him throw his crutch at one of the unfavoured boats. The tide came in rapidly—he lost his crutches, and would have been drowned, but for the care of some of the spectators: he was, however, wholly inattentive to anything save his boats. He is said to be quite insane and perfectly ungovernable, and will not live in a house, or wear any clothes, and his whole life is spent in this one business—making and managing a fleet of wooden boats, of which he is sole admiral. How near this mad youth is to a genius, a hero, or to an angler, who injures his health and risks his life by going into the water as high as his middle, in the hope of catching a fish which he sees rise, though he already has a pannier full!”

One more extract I must allow myself, if only for the pleasure of quoting Christopher North's comments upon it—for Kit's critique on "Salmonia" was one of the raciest things he ever wrote. The scene is laid at a Highland inn. Enter—

"The Innkeeper. Gentlemen, dinner is ready.

THE DINNER.

Hal. Now take your places. What think you of our fish?

Phys. I never ate better; but I want the Harvey or Reading sauce.

Hal. Pray let me entreat you to use no other sauce than the water in which he was boiled. I assure you this is the true Epicurean way of eating fresh salmon: and for the trout, use only a little vinegar and mustard—a sauce *d la Tartare*, without the onions.

Poiet. Well, nothing can be better; and I do not think fresh net-caught fish can be superior to these.

Hal. And these snipes are excellent. Either my journey has given me an appetite, or I think they are the best I ever tasted.

Orn. They are good; but I have tasted better.

Hal. Where?

Orn. On the Continent; where the common snipe, that rests during its migration from the north to the south in the marshes of Italy and Carniola, and the double, or solitary snipe, become so fat as to resemble that bird which was formerly fattened in Lincolnshire, the ruff; and they have, I think, a better flavour from being fed on their natural food.

Hal. At what time have you eaten them?

Orn. I have eaten them both in spring and autumn ; but the autumnal birds are the best, and are like the ortolan of Italy.

Hal. Where does the double snipe winter?

Orn. I believe in Africa and Asia Minor. They are rarely seen in England, except driven by an east wind in the spring, or a strong north wind in the winter. Their natural progress is to and from Finland and Siberia, through the continent of Europe, to and from the east and south. In autumn they pass more east, both because they are aided by west winds, and because the marshes in the east of Europe are wetter in that season ; and in spring they return, but the larger proportion through Italy, where they are carried by the *sirocco*, and which at that time is *extremely wet*. Come, let us have another bottle of claret : a pint per man is not too much after such a day's fatigue.

Hal. You have made me president for these four days, and I forbid it. A half pint of wine for young men in perfect health is enough, and you will be able to take your exercise better, and feel better for this abstinence. How few people calculate upon the effects of constantly renewed fever, in our luxurious system of living in England ! The heart is made to act too powerfully, blood is thrown upon the nobler parts, and, with the system of wading adopted by some sportsmen, whether in shooting or fishing, is delivered either to the hemorrhoidal veins, or, what is worse, to the head. I have known several free livers, who have terminated their lives by apoplexy, or have

been rendered miserable by palsy, in consequence of the joint effect of cold feet and too stimulating a diet ; that is to say, as much animal food as they could eat, with a pint or perhaps a bottle of wine per day. Be guided by me, my friends, and neither drink nor wade. I know there are old men who have done both, and have enjoyed perfect health ; but these are *devil's decoys* to the unwary, and ten suffer for one that escapes. I could quote you an instance from this very country, in one of the strongest men I have ever known. He was not intemperate, but he lived luxuriously, and waded as a salmon fisher for many years in this very river ; but before he was fifty, palsy deprived him of the use of his limbs, and he is still a living example of the danger of the system which you are ambitious of adopting.

Orn. Well, I give up the wine, but I intend to wade in Hancock's boots to-morrow.

Hal. Wear them, but do not wade in them. The feet must become cold in a stream of water constantly passing over the caoutchouc and leather, notwithstanding the thick stockings. They are good for keeping the feet warm, and I think where there is exercise as in snipe shooting, they may be used without any bad effects. But I advise no one to stand still (which an angler must do sometimes) in the water, even with these ingenious water-proof inventions. All anglers should remember old Boerhaave's maxims of health, and act upon them : 'Keep the feet warm, the head cool, and the body open.'"

Even Walter Scott, gently and genially as he deals

with his friend Sir Humphry, falls foul of that pitiful piece of molly-coddling, and declares that wading never did any angler harm if he only took a stiff dram of "right Nantz, Schiedam or Glenlivet." But Christopher North lashes himself into a perfect fury of sardonic indignation. After giving a category of the dullest dinners known to man, he exclaims that not the worst of them "can in intensest stupidity one moment hope to stand the most distant comparison with this ANGLER'S DINNER, eaten on the banks of the Ewe, the emptier of Loch Maree, by these four gentlemen, poets, physicians, philosophers, and what not, from the far-off and mighty London.

At each successive and successful mouthful of the curd, was each member of the club bound to say something wise or witty; bound in duty, in honour, and in gratitude. The perpetually recurring excitement and assuagement of the palate, prolonged, as we must believe, during ten hours at the very least—for they have been at work, walking, rowing, and angling, for forty miles, and fourteen hours, at the lowest computation, without refreshment—ought to have set all their tongues a-wagging like the clappers of so many bells. It was imperative upon them to scintillate—to coruscate—to meteorize—to make the natives positively believe that a "new sun had risen on mid-day," and that the 22nd of June had that year been delayed till the 15th of July. It was imperative on them to have drunk for their own share—a gallon of Glenlivet—merely a bottle a-piece, a quantity which, if taken moderately, can, in the climate of Loch Maree, hurt not a hair

on the head of any sober Christian. It was imperative upon them to have insisted on the boatmen, also four in number, whether they could or not, emptying their keg of calkers. It was incumbent upon them to have brought into a state of civilisation all such of the natives of that wild district as had been gathered together in and about the inn, by the fame of the arrival of the Missionaries. The landlord, of course, should have been laid on his back among the blooming heather, long before sunset; and the pleasing toil of distribution been devolved on his wife and daughters, who, except at marriages, christenings, and funerals eschew the creature.

Instead of a scene like this, equally rational and sentimental, and the sweet savour of which would have scented the mountain air for years after the departure of the Sassenachs, whose names would have been remembered till doomsday in many a flowing quech,—‘list, O list, if ever you did your dear Father love,’—list to the brace of most portentous blockheads !

Ornither. ‘Come, let us have another bottle of claret—a pint per man is not too MUCH !!!! after such a day’s fatigue !!!!!!!!!!!!!!’

Haliens. ‘You have made me president for four days, and I forbid it !!!! A HALF PINT FOR YOUNG MEN IN PERFECT HEALTH IS ENOUGH ; and you will be able to take your exercise better and feel better for this abstinence !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!’

Ornither. ‘Well, I give up the wine—but I intend to wade in Hancock’s boots to-morrow !!!!!!’

A more mean, and melancholy, and miserable, and

monstrous picture was never drawn of humanity than this. Half a pint of claret! Poor devils! Wading to-morrow in Hancock's boots! Cold feet! Apoplexy! Palsy! 'Be guided by me—neither drink nor wade!!' 'Remember old Boerhaave's maxims of health,—I act upon them—"Keep the feet warm—the head cool—and the body open!!!"' A maxim on a fishing excursion equally despicable and disgusting. Really 'Salmonia' smells like a dose of Glauber salt in a tea-cup, and Sir Humphry is unpleasantly strong of the shop."

For myself I can only "say ditto" to Christopher. But stiff, stilted, and often priggish as the talk of Halicæus and his friends is, and unreal and artificial though their surroundings are, nevertheless, the book is full of interest for the angler and the student of natural history. And I think Halicæus justly sums up its merits in his farewell remarks:

"*Hal.* But our horses are ready, and the time of separation arrives. I trust we shall all have a happy meeting in England in the winter. I have made you idlers at home and abroad, but I hope to some purpose; and, I trust, you will confess that the time bestowed upon angling has not been thrown away. The most important principle perhaps in life is to have a pursuit—a useful one if possible, and at all events an innocent one. And the scenes you have enjoyed—the contemplations to which they have led, and the exercise in which we have indulged, have, I am sure, been very salutary to the body, and, I hope, to the mind. I have always found a peculiar effect from this kind of life;

it has appeared to bring me back to early times and feelings, and to create again the hopes and happiness of youthful days. . . . For my health, I may thank my ancestors, after my God, and I have not squandered what was so bountifully given ; and though I do not expect like our arch-patriarch, Walton, to number ninety years and upwards, yet I hope, as long as I can enjoy in a vernal day the warmth and light of the sunbeams, still to haunt the streams—following the example of our late venerable friend, the President of the Royal Academy [Sir Benjamin West], in company with whom, when he was an octogenarian, I have thrown the fly, caught trout, and enjoyed a delightful day of angling and social amusement, in the shady green meadows by the bright clear streams of the Wandle.”

It was, perhaps, with some presentiment that he was not destined to enjoy a long life that Sir Humphry penned those concluding lines ; but he could have little dreamed how soon his “days of fly-fishing” were to end. “Salmonia” was published in 1828. Davy passed the following winter at Rome, and in the spring started on a fishing tour among the lakes and streams of Italy, the Tyrol, and Switzerland. Scarcely a day passed in which he did not jot down in his Diary some fresh angling experience. He arrived at Geneva on May 27th. The next day he went fishing, and dined heartily on the spoils of his rod. His wife, who was with him, had never seen him in better spirits. But about midnight he was suddenly seized with apoplexy, and before day-break he was dead—dead in his prime, for he was only fifty-two.

The municipality of Geneva granted him a public funeral, and every scientific institution in the world paid its eloquent tribute to the genius of the greatest chemist of his age. His great contemporary Cuvier, the foremost naturalist of his day, assigned him the first place among the scientific discoverers of his time. His successor as President of the Royal Society pronounced him to have been "not only one of the greatest but one of the most benevolent and amiable of men."

Of his popularity among the common people and the respect in which they held him Lord Brougham gives the following singular illustration. Returning home one evening, he observed an ordinary man showing the moon and a planet through a telescope placed upon the pavement. He went up and paid his pence for a look. But no such thing would they permit. "That's Sir Humphry" ran among the people; and the exhibitor, returning his money, said, with an important air which exceedingly delighted Davy, that "he could not think of taking anything from a brother-philosopher."

But whilst Science claims the largest share in the fame of her brilliant son, Sport had at least an equal share in his affection. The happiest hours of his life were those passed with rod and gun. His love of fishing and shooting remained unabated till his last hour. In the pursuit of these sports he showed the same zeal, energy, and thirst for investigation which characterised his career as a scientific discoverer. He set himself as seriously to master the art of angling as to explore the secrets of chemistry. He studied the habits of birds and fish as

carefully as the composition of gases. And when he put the results of his study to a practical test his success was as great in the one as in the other. He showed the world that it was possible for a man of high and rare intelligence to be an enthusiast alike in science and in sport, and to be a King of both.

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